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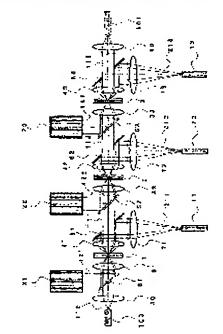
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(54) OPTICAL PATH SWITCHING APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR SWITCHING OPTICAL PATH

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide an optical path switching apparatus and a method for switching optical path by which angles and directions for switching optical paths can be freely determined without depending on polarized waves, attenuation in the intensity of signal light is little, and multiple iunctions can be used.

SOLUTION: The method for switching optical paths includes the following steps in which: light absorbing layer films in thermal lens forming elements 1, 2, 3 are irradiated with converged light of controlling light 121, 122, 123 in the wavelength bands where the light absorbing films show absorption and of signal light 110, 111, 112, 113 in the wavelength bands where the films do not show absorption; when the films are not irradiated with the controlling light, the signal light passes through holes 61, 62, 63 in mirrors to straightly propagate; and when the films are irradiated with the controlling light, the light is reflected by the holed mirrors to change the optical paths.



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CLAIMS

[Claim(s)]

[Claim 1]

The light absorption layer membrane arranged so that control light may connect a focus at least, A means to complete respectively and to irradiate the control light of the wavelength chosen as said light absorption layer membrane from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs at least, and the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb,

By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field where said light absorption layer membrane absorbed said control light, and its boundary region including said light absorption layer membrane, and is produced reversibly The condition that said signal light which it converged carries out outgoing radiation at the usual aperture include angle when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, It is the heat lens formation component which said signal light which it converged makes the condition of carrying out outgoing radiation correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, and makes realize it at a larger aperture include angle than the usual aperture include angle when control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed,

Said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle as it is After making said usual aperture include angle change with a light-receiving lens, said signal light which is the mirror which prepared the hole to pass, and carries out outgoing radiation while spreading from said heat lens formation component at a larger aperture include angle than usual or as it is Or the mirror which makes an optical path change by reflecting after making a larger aperture include angle than usual [said] change with said light-receiving lens,

The optical-path transfer device characterized by preparation ******. [Claim 2]

The light absorption layer membrane arranged so that control light may connect a focus at least, A means to complete respectively and to irradiate the control light of the wavelength chosen as said light absorption layer membrane from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs at least, and the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb,

By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field where said light absorption layer membrane absorbed said control light, and its boundary region including said light absorption layer membrane, and is produced reversibly The condition of carrying out outgoing radiation while it had converged said signal light which it converged, when control light was irradiated and a heat lens was formed, It is the heat lens formation component which said signal light which it converged makes the condition of carrying out outgoing radiation correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, and makes realize it at the usual aperture include angle when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed,

The mirror which makes an optical path change by reflecting after making the light-receiving lens prepared in said signal light which is the mirror which prepared the hole through which said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component while it had converged, and which it converged passes, and carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle in order to make remaining as it is or said aperture include angle change penetrate, The optical-path transfer device characterized by preparation ******.

[Claim 3]

The control light of the wavelength chosen as the light absorption layer membrane in the heat lens formation component which contains a light absorption layer membrane at least from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs, Make it converge respectively and the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb is irradiated. Arrangement of said light absorption layer membrane is adjusted so that said control light may connect a focus in said light absorption layer membrane at least. By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which said light absorption layer membrane originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field which absorbed said control light, and its boundary region, and produces reversibly The condition that said signal light which it converged carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, When control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed, at a larger aperture include angle than the usual aperture include angle, from said heat lens formation component, said signal light which it converged makes the condition of carrying out outgoing radiation correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, and realizes it,

When control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, it is made to go straight on through the hole of a mirror in which the hole where said signal light passes said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle after making said usual aperture include angle change with remaining as it is or a light-receiving lens was established. it be the optical path change approach characterize by on the other hand make an optical path change by reflect said signal light which carry out outgoing radiation while spread from said heat lens formation component at a larger aperture include angle than usual using the reflector of said mirror with a hole after make the aperture include angle of said flare change with remain as it is or a light-receiving lens when control light be irradiate and a heat lens be form .

[Claim 4]

The control light of the wavelength chosen as the light absorption layer membrane in the heat lens formation component which contains a light absorption layer membrane at least from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs, Make it converge respectively and the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb is irradiated. Arrangement of said light absorption layer membrane is adjusted so that said control light may connect a focus in said light absorption layer membrane at least. By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which said light absorption layer membrane originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field which absorbed said control light, and its boundary region, and produces reversibly The condition of carrying out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component while it had converged said signal light which it converged, when control light was irradiated and a heat lens was formed, When control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, at the usual aperture include angle, from said heat lens formation component, said signal light which it converged makes the condition of carrying out outgoing radiation correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, and realizes it,

When control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed, it is made to go straight on through the hole of a mirror in which the hole where signal light passes said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation, and which it converged was established from said heat lens formation component, while it had converged. It be the optical path change approach characterize by on the other hand make an optical path change by reflect the optical path of said signal light which carry out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle using the reflector of said mirror with a hole after make the aperture include angle of said flare change with remain as it is or a light-receiving lens when control light be irradiate and a heat lens be form .

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[Field of the Invention]

This invention relates to the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach which are used in the optical-communication field and the optical-information-processing field.

[Description of the Prior Art]

Since it corresponds to the explosive increase of the network traffic accompanying the spread of the Internet, and the inside of a firm and domestic intranets, the optical-path transfer device which does not go via an electrical signal (optical switch), i.e., optical - light direct switch, is called for. As an optical fiber, optical waveguide, or the route to which the light which spreads space progresses, i.e., the equipment and the approach which change an optical path For example, the space division mold which changes an optical path between the optical waveguides within optical waveguide, The wavelength division multiplex mold which divides and changes the light of two or more multiplexed wavelength to the optical path according to wavelength, Methods, such as a Time-Division-Multiplexing mold which changes the optical path of the light by which time-division multiplexing was carried out for every fixed time amount, and a free space mold which uses a mirror, a shutter, etc., and divides and compounds spatially the optical path of the light which spreads space, are learned. Multiplexing respectively can also use these methods combining plurality.

[0003]

Although what is made to penetrate the light which has spread waveguide by changing the refractive index of waveguide to a space division mold optical switch by part for what makes the copy of a lightwave signal from the thing and the optical turnout using a directional coupler, and turns light on and off by the gate component, a crossover, or the intersection of Y branch, or is reflected is proposed, it is still a researches-and-developments phase. Although it is said that the thing using the thermooptic effect by electric heater heating is approaching utilization in order to change the refractive index of the waveguide of a Mach-Zehnder-interferometer mold optical waveguide switch, it has the fault that an electrical signal must be used in order that it is not only late, but a speed of response may operate an optical switch with 1 ms extent. [0004]

A micro electro mechanical system (written as Micro Electro Mechanical System; MEMS.), exciton absorption / reflective switch (written as an Exciton Absorption Reflection Switch; EARS switch), the multistage beam shifter mold optical switch, the hologram mold optical switch, the liquid crystal switch, etc. are considered by the free space mold optical switch. These have technical problems, like that the amount of mechanical moving part is and there is a polarization dependency, and cannot say that it is still in a practical use phase enough.

[0005]

Permeability change and refractive-index change which are caused to an optical element by irradiating light on the other hand are used, and research of the all-optical optical element which modulates luminous intensity and a frequency with light, or an optical control system is done briskly directly. this invention persons have studied the optical control system using the organic nano particle light-and-heat lens formation component (nonpatent literature 1 reference) which distributed organic-coloring-matter floc to the polymer matrix aiming at development of the new information processing technique by an all-optical light corpuscle child etc. By the method which modulates signal light (780nm) by current and control light (633nm), it is characterized by carrying out the same axle and parfocal incidence of control light and the signal light, the

component of the principle of operation that signal light is refracted with the heat lens transitionally formed of the control absorption of light is developed, and the high-speed response for about 20 nanoseconds is attained. It is the optical control approach of irradiating control light at the optical element which consists of an optical responsibility constituent, and performing said signal luminous-intensity modulation and/or luminous-density modulation which penetrate said optical element when control light changes reversibly the permeability and/or refractive index of signal light in a different wavelength band. Complete respectively said control light and said signal light, and it irradiates to said optical element. and The field where the photon density near each focus (beam waist) of said control light and said signal light is the highest sets in said optical element. The optical control approach characterized by adjusting the optical path of said control light and said signal light so that it may overlap mutually is indicated (from the patent reference 1 to patent reference 7 reference). The control light and signal light from which wavelength differs mutually in the optical element which consists of an optical responsibility constituent are irradiated. The wavelength of said control light shall be chosen from the wavelength band which said optical responsibility constituent absorbs. The heat lens based on distribution of the consistency change resulting from the temperature rise which said optical responsibility constituent generates in the field which absorbed said control light, and its boundary region is made to form reversibly. The optical control approach of performing the signal luminous-intensity modulation and/or luminous-density modulation which penetrate said heat lens is indicated (patent reference 8 reference). And for example, coloring matter / resin film, and the coloring matter solution film are used as the above-mentioned optical element, and the power 2 of control light thru/or the response time of the signal light to the control light exposure in 25mW are indicated to be less than 2 microseconds (patent reference 8 reference).

[0006]

The optical-refraction effectiveness which functions like [the distribution to which temperature distribution arise when the molecule which absorbed light in a part for the core of light absorption with the thermal lensing effect here changes light into heat and this heat spreads around, consequently the refractive index of a light-transmission medium changes spherically towards the exterior from a light absorption core, and a refractive index becomes high towards / the refractive index based on light absorption is low, and / the exterior is produced, and] a concave lens in this is shown. The thermal lensing effect is used in the field of spectral analysis for many years, and super-high sensitivity spectral analysis which also detects the light absorption by one molecule is also possible in current (nonpatent literature 2 and nonpatent literature 3 reference).

[0007]

As a method which deflects an optical path using the refractive-index change by the thermal lensing effect thru/or heat, heat is given to a medium by the exoergic resistor, refractive-index distribution is produced in a medium, and the approach of deflecting light is indicated (patent reference 9 reference). However, since above-mentioned technique will be made to generate heat by the exoergic resistor and a medium will be heated by heat conduction, it has a problem of "the flare of heat" essentially. That is, it is difficult to be unable to give a detailed heat gradient within a large area, but to acquire desired refractive-index distribution by the flare of heat. Furthermore, even if micro processing of an exoergic resistor adopts the photolithography technique used with the semiconductor integrated circuit, it has an actually fixed limitation and a component cannot but enlarge it. if a component is enlarged, in connection with it, optical system is also complicated -- and it enlarges. Moreover, since it will be made to generate heat by the exoergic resistor and a medium will be heated by heat conduction, it has the fault that a response is slow and cannot raise the frequency of refractive-index change, as an essential problem.

Moreover, intensity-distribution adjustment devices for irradiating light by wedge-shaped optical intensity distribution are consisted of at least by the optical element which consists of an optical response constituent, and this optical element, refractive-index distribution is formed into said optical element by control light, and the deviation component using the optical element characterized by deflecting signal light of the wavelength which differs from said control light according to this refractive-index distribution is indicated (patent reference 10 reference). Although this method is excellent in the point which controls light by light, it has constraint of less than 30 degrees in a deflecting angle, and has the problem that the optical-path change direction cannot be set up freely.

[Nonpatent literature 1]

Yoshitaka Taira, Norio Tanaka, Kikuko Hayamizu, Tetsuro Moriya work, creation, structure evaluation and

the optical physical properties of a coloring matter meeting object and floc, the "Electrotechnical Laboratory ****", the Ministry of International Trade and Industry Electrotechnical Laboratory, Agency of Industrial Science and Technology issue, the 59th volume, No. 2, 29 - 49 pages (1994) [Nonpatent literature 2]

The application to the Fujiwara ******, Keiichiro Fuwa, Takayoshi Kobayashi work, a laser induction thermal lensing effect, and its colorimetric method, "chemistry", the Kagaku-Dojin issue, the 36th volume, No. 6, 432 - 438 pages (1981)

[Nonpatent literature 3]

Takehiko Kitamori, the Sawada ******, a light-and-heat conversion spectral-analysis method, a "**** weir", the Japan Society for Analytical Chemistry issue, the March, 1994 issue, 178 - 187 pages

[Patent reference 1] JP,8-286220,A

[Patent reference 2]

JP,8-320535,A

[Patent reference 3]

JP,8-320536,A

[Patent reference 4]

JP,9-329816,A

[Patent reference 5]

JP,10-90733,A

[Patent reference 6]

JP,10-90734,A

[Patent reference 7]

JP,10-148852,A

[Patent reference 8]

JP,10-148853,A

[Patent reference 9]

JP,60-14221,A

[Patent reference 10]

JP,11-194373,A

[0010]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention]

This invention aims at offering the optical-path transfer device with little attenuation on the strength [optical] in which multiply-connected use is possible and the optical-path change approach of signal light which can be set up freely for the include angle and direction of an optical-path change without a polarization dependency with high endurance which do not have failure, without using a part for an electrical circuit or mechanical moving part.

[Means for Solving the Problem]

In order to attain the above-mentioned purpose, the optical-path transfer device of this invention The light absorption layer membrane arranged so that control light may connect a focus at least, and the control light of the wavelength chosen as said light absorption layer membrane from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs at least, A means to complete respectively and to irradiate the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb, By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field where said light absorption layer membrane absorbed said control light, and its boundary region including said light absorption layer membrane, and is produced reversibly The condition of carrying out outgoing radiation while said signal light which it converged spreads at the usual aperture include angle, when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, The heat lens formation component which said signal light which it converged makes the condition of carrying out outgoing radiation correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, and makes realize it at a larger aperture include angle than the usual aperture include angle when control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed, Said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle as it is After making said usual aperture include angle change with a light-receiving lens, said signal light which is the mirror which prepared the hole to pass, and carries out outgoing radiation while spreading from said heat lens formation component at

a larger aperture include angle than usual or as it is Or after making a larger aperture include angle than usual [said] change with said light-receiving lens, it is characterized by having the mirror which makes an optical path change by reflecting.

In order to attain the above-mentioned purpose, other optical-path transfer devices of this invention Moreover, the light absorption layer membrane arranged so that control light may connect a focus at least. The control light of the wavelength chosen as said light absorption layer membrane from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs at least, A means to complete respectively and to irradiate the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb, By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field where said light absorption layer membrane absorbed said control light, and its boundary region including said absorption layer membrane, and is produced reversibly The condition of carrying out outgoing radiation while it had converged said signal light which it converged, when control light was irradiated and a heat lens was formed. The heat lens formation component which said signal light which it converged makes the condition of carrying out outgoing radiation correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, and makes realize it at the usual aperture include angle when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, Said signal light which is the mirror which prepared the hole through which said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component while it had converged, and which it converged passes, and carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle as it is Or after making the light-receiving lens prepared in order to make said aperture include angle change penetrate, it is characterized by having the mirror which makes an optical path change by reflecting. [0013]

In order to attain the above-mentioned purpose, the optical-path change approach of this invention The control light of the wavelength chosen as the light absorption layer membrane in the heat lens formation component which contains a light absorption layer membrane at least from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs, Make it converge respectively and the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb is irradiated. Arrangement of said light absorption layer membrane is adjusted so that said control light may connect a focus in said light absorption layer membrane at least. By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which said light absorption layer membrane originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field which absorbed said control light, and its boundary region, and produces reversibly The condition that said signal light which it converged carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed, The condition of carrying out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at an aperture include angle with said signal light larger when control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed which it converged than the usual aperture include angle When it is made to realize by making it correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed Said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle as it is Or after making said usual aperture include angle change with a light-receiving lens, it is made to go straight on through the hole of a mirror in which the hole through which said signal light passes was established. When control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed, on the other hand, said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation while spreading from said heat lens formation component at a larger aperture include angle than usual as it is Or after making the aperture include angle of said flare change with a light-receiving lens, it is characterized by making an optical path change by reflecting using the reflector of said mirror with a hole. [0014]

In order to attain the above-mentioned purpose, other optical-path change approaches of this invention Moreover, the control light of the wavelength chosen as the light absorption layer membrane in the heat lens formation component which contains a light absorption layer membrane at least from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane absorbs, Make it converge respectively and the signal light of the wavelength chosen from the wavelength band which said light absorption layer membrane does not absorb is irradiated. Arrangement of said light absorption layer membrane is adjusted so that said control light may connect a focus in said light absorption layer membrane at least. By using the heat lens based on distribution of the refractive index which said light absorption layer membrane originates in the temperature rise which happens to the field which absorbed said control light, and its boundary region, and produces

reversibly The condition of carrying out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component while it had converged said signal light which it converged, when control light was irradiated and a heat lens was formed, The condition that said signal light which it converged carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle when control light is not irradiated and a heat lens is not formed When it is made to realize by making it correspond to the existence of an exposure of said control light, control light is irradiated and a heat lens is formed Said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component while it had converged and which it converged When it is made to go straight on through the hole of a mirror in which the hole through which signal light passes was established, control light is not irradiated on the other hand and a heat lens is not formed It is characterized by making an optical path change by reflecting the optical path of said signal light which carries out outgoing radiation from said heat lens formation component at the usual aperture include angle using the reflector of said mirror with a hole, after making the aperture include angle of said flare change with remaining as it is or a light-receiving lens.

[Embodiment of the Invention]

[Heat lens formation component]

In this invention, what has for example, laminating membrane type structure as a heat lens formation component can be used suitably, and if it considers as the configuration of the cascade screen, the following combination can be mentioned.

[0016]

- (1) A light absorption layer membrane independent. However, light absorption layer membranes may be any of the laminating mold thin film of "light absorption film" independent monolayer, the two-layer structure of "the light absorption film / heat lens formative layer", or the three-tiered structure "the light absorption film / heat lens formative layer / light absorption film" literally. In addition, the following "light absorption layer membranes" of (2) to (10) shall include the same structure as the above.
- (2) A light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane
- (3) An incubation layer membrane / light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane
- (4) A light absorption layer membrane / heat transfer layer membrane
- (5) A heat transfer layer membrane / light absorption layer membrane / heat transfer layer membrane
- (6) A light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane / heat transfer layer membrane
- (7) A heat transfer layer membrane / light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane
- (8) A heat transfer layer membrane / light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane / heat transfer layer membrane
- (9) A heat transfer layer membrane / incubation layer membrane / light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane
- (10) A heat transfer layer membrane / incubation layer membrane / light absorption layer membrane / incubation layer membrane
- (11) A gradient index lens / (light transmission layer/) above (1) thru/or (10) heat lens formation components
- (12) A gradient index lens / (light transmission layer/) above (1) thru/or (10) heat lens formation components / (light transmission layer/) gradient index lenses

In addition, it means preparing a light transmission layer if needed in above-mentioned "" (light transmission layer/). Furthermore, an antireflection film (AR coat film) may be prepared in the plane of incidence and the outgoing radiation side of light if needed. [0018]

The sectional view which illustrated an example of the configuration of a heat lens formation component is shown in <u>drawing 5</u>. The laminating of the heat lens formation component 500 is carried out to the order of gradient index lens 507 / light transmission layer 506 / heat transfer layer membrane 501 / light absorption layer membrane 503 / heat lens formative layer 505 / light absorption layer membrane 504 / heat transfer layer membrane 502, and it consists of an incidence side of the control light 509 and the signal light 508, for example so that it may illustrate to <u>drawing 5</u>. In addition, the beam of light of the control light 509 shown in <u>drawing 5</u> is typical, and refraction between class film is omitted.

Order is explained later on below about a light absorption layer membrane, the heat lens formative layer, an incubation layer membrane, a heat transfer layer membrane, a light transmission layer and the ingredient of

a gradient index lens, the creation approach, each thickness, etc. [0020]

In addition, in the range which does not cause trouble to the function, the light absorption layer membrane and the heat lens formative layer which are used by this invention, an incubation layer membrane, a heat transfer layer membrane, a light transmission layer, and the ingredient of a gradient index lens may contain an anti-oxidant well-known as an additive, an ultraviolet ray absorbent, a singlet oxygen quencher, a distributed assistant, etc. in order to raise workability or to raise the stability and endurance as an optical element.

[0021]

[The ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane]

Well-known various things can be used as an ingredient of light absorption nature used for the light absorption layer membrane in the heat lens formation component used by this invention. [0022]

If the example of the light absorption nature ingredient used for the light absorption layer membrane in the heat lens formation component used by this invention is given concretely For example, GaAs, GaAsP, GaAlAs, InP, InSb, The single crystal of compound semiconductors, such as InAs, PbTe, InGaAsP, and ZnSe, What distributed the particle of said compound semiconductor into the matrix material, the metal halogenide which doped dissimilar metal ion (For example, single crystals, such as a potassium bromide and a sodium chloride), said metal halogenide What distributed (for example, particles, such as a copper bromide, a copper chloride, and a cobalt chloride) into the matrix material, CdS, CdSe, CdSeS which doped dissimilar metal ion, such as copper, What distributed the single crystal of cadmium chalcogenide, such as CdSeTe, and the particle of said cadmium chalcogenide in the matrix material, Semi-conductor single crystal thin films, such as silicon, germanium, a selenium, and a tellurium, What distributed semi-conductor particles, such as a polycrystal thin film thru/or a porosity thin film, silicon, germanium, a selenium, and a tellurium, into the matrix material, A ruby, alexandrite, a garnet, Nd:YAG, sapphire, Ti: The single crystal equivalent to the jewel which doped metal ions, such as sapphire and Nd:YLF, (the so-called laser crystal), The lithium niobate which doped the metal ion (for example, iron ion) (LiNbO3), Ferroelectric crystals, such as LiB 3O5, LiTaO3 and KTiOPO4, KH2PO4, and KNbO3, BaB 2O2, The quartz glass which doped metal ions (for example, neodium ion, erbium ion, etc.), The thing which dissolved or distributed coloring matter, and amorphous coloring matter floc can be suitably used into a matrix material besides being soda glass, borosilicate glass, other glass, etc.

[0023]

Since a matrix material and the selection range of coloring matter are wide and processing to a heat lens formation component is also easy the range, what dissolved or distributed coloring matter in the matrix material also in these can be used especially suitably.

[0024]

As an example of the coloring matter which can be used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention For example, xanthene dyes, such as Rhodamine B, rhodamine 6G, eosine, and Phloxine B, Acridine dyes, such as an acridine orange and acridine red, ethyl red, Azo dye, such as Methyl Red, porphyrin system coloring matter, phthalocyanine system coloring matter, Cyanine dye, such as - diethyl thia carbocyanine iodide, and 3 and 3 '3, 3'-diethyl OKISA dicarbocyanine iodide, Thoria reel methane system coloring matter, such as ethyl violet and Victoria blue R, naphthoquinone system coloring matter, anthraquinone system coloring matter, naphthalene tetracarboxylic acid diimide system coloring matter, perylene tetracarboxylic acid diimide system coloring matter, etc. can be used suitably. [0025]

By the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention, it is independent about these coloring matter, or two or more sorts can be mixed and used.

[0026]

The matrix material which can be used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention,

- (1) Permeability is high in the wavelength field of the light used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention,
- (2) It can stability-good-dissolve or the coloring matter or the various particles which are used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention can be distributed, The thing of arbitration can be used if the conditions to say are satisfied.

 [0027]

The low-melting-glass ingredient created as a matrix material of an inorganic system with the so-called sol gel process besides being the single crystal of a metal halogenide, the single crystal of a metallic oxide, the single crystal of metal chalcogenide, quartz glass, soda glass, borosilicate glass, etc., for example can be used.

[0028]

Moreover, as a matrix material of an organic system, various organic polymeric materials can be used, for example. As the example, polystyrene, Pori (alpha methyl styrene), The poly indene, Pori (4-methyl-1pentene), polyvinyl pyridine, A polyvinyl formal, a polyvinyl acetal, a polyvinyl butyral, Polyvinyl acetate, polyvinyl alcohol, a polyvinyl chloride, a polyvinylidene chloride, Polyvinyl methyl ether, polyvinyl ethyl ether, polyvinyl benzyl ether, A polyvinyl methyl ketone, Pori (N-vinylcarbazole), poly(Nvinylpyrrolidone), Polymethylacrylate, polyacrylic acid ethyl, polyacrylic acid, a polyacrylonitrile, A polymethyl methacrylate, polymethacrylic acid ethyl, polymethacrylic acid butyl, Polymethacrylic acid benzyl, polymethacrylic acid cyclohexyl, polymethacrylic acid, A polymethacrylic acid amide, the poly methacrylonitrile, the poly acetaldehyde, The poly trichloroacetic aldehyde, polyethylene oxide, polypropylene oxide, Polyethylene terephthalate, polybutylene terephthalate, and polycarbonates (bisphenols + carbonic acid) Pori (diethylene-glycol bisallyl carbonate), 6-nylon, 6 and 6-nylon, 12-nylon, 6, 12-nylon, Pori aspartic-acid ethyl, Polyglutamic acid ethyl, the poly lysine, polyproline, Pori (gammabenzyl-L-glutamate), Methyl cellulose, ethyl cellulose, benzyl cellulose, hydroxyethyl cellulose, Hydroxypropylcellulose, an acetyl cellulose, cellulose triacetate, Cel low SUTORI butyrate, alkyd resin (phthalic anhydride + glycerol), Fatty-acid modified alkyd resin (fatty-acid + phthalic anhydride + glycerol), an unsaturated polyester resin (maleic-anhydride + phthalic anhydride + propylene glycol), An epoxy resin (bisphenols + epichlorohydrin), polyurethane resin, Organic polysilane, such as resin, such as phenol resin, a urea-resin, melamine resin, xylene resin, a toluene resin, and guanamine resin, and Pori (phenyl methylsilane), the organic poly germane, and these copolymerization and copolycondensation objects are mentioned. Moreover, a carbon disulfide, carbon tetrafluoride, ethylbenzene, perfluoro benzene, a perfluoro cyclohexane, or trimethylchlorosilane can use in usual the high molecular compound which carried out the plasma polymerization of the compound without polymerization nature, and obtained it. Furthermore, what it combines as a copolymerization monomeric unit together as a bridge formation radical, and combined the residue of coloring matter as a polymerization initiation end as a side chain of a monomeric unit can also be used for these organic high molecular compounds as a matrix material. Furthermore, aforementioned coloring matter residue and an aforementioned matrix material may form the chemical bond. [0029]

An approach well-known for dissolving or distributing coloring matter into these matrix materials can be used. For example, after dissolving coloring matter and a matrix material into a common solvent and mixing, How to form a matrix material, since coloring matter is dissolved or distributed to the raw material solution of the inorganic system matrix material manufactured with the approach of evaporating a solvent and removing, and a sol gel process, Into the monomer of an organic macromolecule system matrix material, a solvent is used if needed. Since coloring matter is dissolved or distributed, this monomer A polymerization thru/or the approach of making carry out a polycondensation and forming a matrix material, After carrying out precipitate which both coloring matter and a thermoplastic organic macromolecule system matrix material trickled coloring matter and the solution which dissolved the organic macromolecule system matrix material into the common solvent into the insoluble solvent, and produced it a ** exception and drying, the approach of heating and melting processing it etc. can be used suitably. Although it is known that you are made to form the special meeting object which is made to condense a coloring matter molecule and is called "H meeting object", "J meeting object", etc. with devising the combination and the processing approach of coloring matter and a matrix material, the coloring matter molecule in a matrix material may be used on the conditions which form such a state of aggregation or a meeting condition.

Moreover, an approach well-known for distributing the aforementioned various particles into these matrix materials can be used. Said particle For example, the solution of a matrix material, Or the method of removing a solvent, after distributing in the solution of the precursor of a matrix material, Since said particle is distributed into the monomer of an organic macromolecule system matrix material if needed, this monomer using a solvent as a precursor of a polymerization thru/or the approach of making carry out a polycondensation and forming a matrix material, and a particle After dissolving or distributing metal salts, such as perchloric acid cadmium and a gold chloride, into an organic macromolecule system matrix material, it processes by hydrogen-sulfide gas. For example, the particle of a cadmium sulfide Or the

approach and chemical vapor deposition which deposit a golden particle in a matrix material, respectively, the sputtering method, etc. can be suitably used by heat-treating.

When coloring matter can be made to exist as a thin film of an amorphous state with little light scattering (amorphous) independently, the amorphous coloring matter film can also be used as a light absorption layer membrane, without using a matrix material.

[0032]

Moreover, when coloring matter can be made to exist independently as microcrystal floc which does not cause light scattering, the microcrystal floc of coloring matter can also be used as a light absorption layer membrane, without using a matrix material. If it is the magnitude in which the particle diameter of said coloring matter minute crystal compares the wavelength of said signal light with the wavelength of control light, and does not exceed one fifth of the wavelength of the shorter one when the laminating of the coloring matter microcrystal floc as a light absorption layer membrane is carry out to the heat lens formative layers (resin etc.), heat transfer layer membranes (glass etc.), and/or incubation layer membranes (resin etc.) and it exists as in the heat lens formation component use by this invention, light scattering will not be cause substantially.

[0033]

[The ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane, the wavelength band of signal light, and the wavelength band of control light should put together.]

According to the purpose of use, a suitable combination can be selected and used for the ingredient of the light absorption layer membrane used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention, the wavelength band of signal light, and the wavelength band of control light as such combination.

[0034]

What is necessary is to determine the wavelength thru/or the wavelength band of signal light according to the purpose of use, and just to select the combination of the ingredient of the optimal light absorption layer membrane for controlling this, and the wavelength of control light first as a concrete configuration procedure, for example. Or what is necessary is just to select the ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane suitable for this combination, after determining the combination of the wavelength of signal light and control light according to the purpose of use.

[Thickness of the presentation of the ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane, and the light absorption layer membrane in a light absorption layer membrane, and thickness of the heat lens formative layer]

In the heat lens formation component used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention a light absorption layer membrane "Light absorption film" independent monolayer, Or you may be any of the laminating mold thin film of the two-layer structure of "the light absorption film / heat lens formative layer", or the three-tiered structure "the light absorption film / heat lens formative layer / light absorption film", and, as for the thickness of the whole light absorption layer membrane, it is desirable not to exceed the twice of the confocal distance of said control light which it converged. Furthermore, when aiming at a much more high-speed speed of response, as for the thickness of a light absorption layer membrane it is thin from said laminating mold thin film, it is desirable not to exceed 1 time of the confocal distance of said control light which it converged.

In such conditions, it can set up as such combination on the basis of the permeability of the control light which penetrates a light absorption layer membrane, and signal light about the thickness of the presentation of the ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane used by this invention, and the light absorption film in a light absorption layer membrane (1 or two sheets). For example, the concentration of the component which absorbs control light or signal light at least among the presentations of the ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane can be determined first, and the thickness of the light absorption film in a light absorption layer membrane (1 or two sheets) can be set up so that the permeability of the control light which penetrates a heat lens formation component, and signal light may subsequently become a specific value. Or first, after setting the thickness of the light absorption film in a light absorption layer membrane (1 or two sheets) as a specific value if needed for example, on an equipment design, the presentation of the ingredient of a light absorption layer membrane can be adjusted so that the permeability of the control light which penetrates a heat lens formation component, and signal light may become a specific value.

[0037]

The value of the permeability of the control light which penetrates the light absorption layer membrane optimal in order to pull out magnitude sufficient by the lowest possible optical power and a high-speed thermal lensing effect from the heat lens formation component used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention, and signal light is as being shown below, respectively. [0038]

In the heat lens formation component used by the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention, performing the concentration of the light absorption component in a light absorption layer membrane and control of an existence condition, and a thickness setup of the light absorption film in a light absorption layer membrane (1 or two sheets) so that the permeability of the control light which spreads the light absorption layer membrane in a heat lens formation component may become 90% thru/or 0% is recommended.

[0039]

Performing the concentration of the light absorption component in a light absorption layer membrane and control of an existence condition, and a thickness setup of the light absorption film in a light absorption layer membrane (1 or two sheets) in the condition of not irradiating control light, on the other hand, so that the permeability of the signal light which spread the light absorption layer membrane in a heat lens formation component may approach to 100% infinite as 10% or more and an upper limit as a minimum be recommend.

[0040]

The minimum of the heat lens formation layer membrane thickness in a light absorption layer membrane is selected according to the ingredient of the heat lens formative layer so that it may indicate below. [0041]

[The ingredient of the heat lens formative layer in a light absorption layer membrane, and thickness of the heat lens formative layer]

Although the light absorption film of a monolayer itself may act as the heat lens formative layer, it is desirable to use it, carrying out the laminating of the optimal ingredient which was made to share the function of light absorption and heat lens formation with a separate ingredient, and was chosen respectively. [0042]

As an ingredient of the heat lens formative layer in a light absorption layer membrane, a liquid, liquid crystal, and a solid ingredient can be used. It is suitable if the heat lens formative layer consists of an amorphous organic compound, an organic compound liquid, and an organic compound chosen from the group which consists of liquid crystal especially. In addition, when the quality of the materials of the heat lens formative layer are liquid crystal and a liquid, the light absorption film and/or a heat transfer layer membrane are created with the quality of the material of self-gestalt holdout, the depletion equivalent to heat lens formation layer thickness can be prepared, and the heat lens formative layer can be created by pouring in the heat lens formative layer ingredient of a flow condition there. What is necessary is on the other hand, to make one side or both sides of the heat lens formative layer carry out the laminating of the light absorption film, and just to create, when the quality of the material of the heat lens formative layer is a solid-state.

[0043]

The quality of the material of the heat lens formative layer may hope that it is not single, may be the cascade screen of two or more kinds of solid-states, and may carry out the laminating of a solid-state and the liquid. [0044]

Although based also on the class of ingredient to be used, especially if the range of heat lens formation layer thickness is dozens of micrometers from dozens of nanometers, it is [that what is necessary is just the thickness of the range of hundreds of micrometers from several nanometers] suitable.

As mentioned above, as for the thickness of the sum total of the light absorption layer membrane which comes to carry out the laminating of the heat lens formative layer, 1, or the light absorption film of two sheets, it is desirable not to exceed the twice of the confocal distance of said control light which it converged.

[0046]

Although a liquid, liquid crystal, and a solid ingredient can be used as an ingredient of the heat lens formative layer in a light absorption layer membrane, in any case, an ingredient with the large temperature dependence of a refractive index is desirable.

[0047]

the physical-properties value of the refractive-index temperature dependence of a typical organic compound liquid and water -- reference [-- D. -- Solimini : It is indicated by J.Appl.Phys., vol.37, and 3314(1966)]. The temperature-change [unit of the refractive index to light with a wavelength of 633nm : 1/K] Alcohol, such as a methanol (3.9x10-4), is larger than water (0.8x10-4). Furthermore, non-hydrogen bond nature organic solvents, such as a cyclopentane (5.7x10-4), benzene (6.4x10-4), chloroform (5.8x10-4), benzene (6.4x10-4), and a carbon disulfide (7.7x10-4), are large.

When using liquid crystal as an ingredient of the heat lens formative layer in a light absorption layer membrane, the thing of well-known arbitration can be used as liquid crystal. Specifically Various cholesterol derivatives, a 4'-n-butoxy benzylidene-4-cyano aniline, 4'4, such as -n-hexyl benzylidene-4cyano aniline, '-alkoxy benzylidene-4-cyano aniline, A 4 '- ethoxy benzylidene-4-n-butyl aniline and 4'methoxybenzylideneamino azobenzene, 4'-alkoxy benzylidene aniline, such as 4-(4'-methoxy benzylidene) amino biphenyl and 4-(4'-methoxy benzylidene) amino stilbene, A 4'-cyano benzylidene-4-n-BUCHITOKISHI aniline, 4'4, such as - cyano benzylidene-4-n-hexyloxy aniline,'-cyano benzylidene-4alkoxy aniline, 4'-n-buthoxycarbonyloxy benzylidene-4-methoxyaniline, Carbonates, such as pcarboxyphenyl and n-amyl carbonate, and n-heptyl, 4-(4'-ethoxy phenoxy carbonyl) phenyl carbonate A 4-nbutyl benzoic acid and 4'- ethoxy phenyl, 4-n-butyl benzoic-acid, and 4'-octyloxy phenyl, 4-alkyl benzoic acid and 4'-alkoxy phenyl ester, such as a 4-n-pentyl benzoic acid and 4'-hexyloxy phenyl Azoxybenzene derivatives, such as - G n-amyloxy azoxybenzene, and 4 and 4 '4, 4'-G n-nonyloxy azoxybenzene, Liquid crystal, such as a 4-cyano-4'-n-octyl biphenyl and 4-cyano-4'4-cyano-4, such as -n-dodecyl biphenyl,'-alkyl biphenyls, And (2S, 3S) a -3-methyl-2-chloro pentanoic acid and4', a 4"-octyloxy biphenyl, Ferroelectric liquid crystals, such as a 4'-(2-methylbutyl) biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid and 4-hexyloxy phenyl, and a 4'octyl biphenyl-4-carboxylic acid, 4-(2-methylbutyl) phenyl, can be used. [0049]

When using a solid ingredient as an ingredient of the heat lens formative layer in a light absorption layer membrane, especially an amorphous organic compound with the big temperature dependence of a refractive index with small light scattering is suitable. Specifically, a thing well-known as resin for optics can be selected and used out of various organic polymeric materials like said matrix material. The temperature changes [unit:1/K] of the refractive index of the resin for optics indicated by reference [edited by TECHNICAL INFORMATION INSTITUTE, "development of the resin for the newest optics, the design of a property and high precision components and forming technique", TECHNICAL INFORMATION INSTITUTE (1993), and P.35] are Pori (methyl methacrylate) 1.2x10-4, a polycarbonate 1.4x10-4, and polystyrene 1.5x10-4. These resin can be suitably used as an ingredient of the heat lens formative layer in a light absorption layer membrane.

[0050]

While the refractive-index temperature dependence of said organic solvent has the merit of being larger than the case of said resin for optics, the problem of boiling if the temperature rise by control light exposure reaches at the boiling point of an organic solvent has it (it is satisfactory when using the solvent of a high-boiling point). On the other hand, in the case of a polycarbonate, the resin for optics from which the volatile impurity was removed thoroughly is usable also in a severe condition to which the temperature rise by control light exposure exceeds 250 degrees C.

[0051]

[Incubation layer membrane]

When using a gas as an incubation layer membrane, inert gas, such as nitrogen besides air, helium, neon, and an argon, can be used suitably.

[0052]

When using a liquid as an incubation layer membrane, thermal conductivity is equivalent to a light absorption layer membrane, or the liquid of arbitration can be used, if it is the quality of the material smaller than a light absorption layer membrane, and control light and signal light are penetrated and the quality of the material of a light absorption layer membrane is not dissolved or corroded. For example, fluid paraffin can be used when a light absorption layer membrane consists of a polymethyl methacrylate containing cyanine dye.

[0053]

When using a solid-state as an incubation layer membrane, thermal conductivity is equivalent to a light absorption layer membrane (light absorption film and heat lens formative layer), or if it is the quality of the

material smaller than a light absorption layer membrane, and control light and signal light are penetrated and it does not react with the quality of the material of a light absorption layer membrane or a heat transfer layer membrane, the solid-state of arbitration can be used. For example, when the light absorption film consists of a polymethyl methacrylate containing cyanine dye, the polymethyl methacrylate [thermal conductivity 0.15Wm-1K-1 in 300K] which does not contain coloring matter can be used as an incubation layer membrane.

[0054]

[The ingredient of a heat transfer layer membrane]

The thing of arbitration can be used, if the quality of the material with larger thermal conductivity than a light absorption layer membrane is desirable as a heat transfer layer membrane, control light and signal light are penetrated and it does not react with the quality of the material of a light absorption layer membrane or an incubation layer membrane. As the quality of the material with high and thermal conductivity and the small light absorption in the wavelength band of a visible ray For example, a diamond [thermal conductivity 900Wm-1K-1 in 300K], sapphire [-- said 46Wm(s)-1K-1] and a quartz single crystal [c-axis -- parallel -- said 10.4Wm(s)-1K-1] and quartz-glass [-- said 1.38Wm(s)-1K-1] and hard-glass [-- said 1.10Wm(s)-1K-1] etc. can be suitably used as a heat transfer layer membrane.

[The ingredient of a light transmission layer]

Although the laminating of the gradient index lens as a convergence means of said control light may be carried out and it may be prepared in the incidence side of said control light through the light transmission layer, as the quality of the material of a light transmission layer, the same thing as the quality of the material of a solid incubation layer membrane and/or a heat transfer layer membrane can be used for the heat lens formation component used by this invention. A light transmission layer is not only for making said control light and signal light penetrate efficiently but for pasting up a gradient index lens as a heat lens formation component component literally. What has the light transmittance of the wavelength band of said control light and signal light high among the so-called ultraviolet curing mold resin or electron ray hardening mold resin can be used especially suitably.

[0056]

[The creation approach of a heat lens formation component]

The creation approach of the heat lens formation component used by this invention is selected by arbitration according to the class of ingredient which a heat lens formation component constitutes and uses, and a well-known approach can be used for it.

[0057]

For example, in the case of the above single crystals, the ingredient of light absorption nature used for the light absorption film in a heat lens formation component can create the light absorption film by cutting / polish processing of a single crystal.

[0058]

For example, when creating the heat lens formative layer which consists of light absorption film which consists of a matrix material containing coloring matter, and resin for optics, and the heat lens formation component of the configuration of "the heat transfer layer membrane / the light absorption film / heat lens formative layer / light absorption film / heat transfer layer membrane" used combining optical glass as a heat transfer layer membrane, the light absorption film can be first created on a heat transfer layer membrane by approach which are enumerated below.

[0059]

The approach of carrying out coating of the solution which dissolved coloring matter and a matrix material on the glass plate used as a heat transfer layer membrane by coating methods, such as the applying method, the blade coat method, the roll coat method, a spin coat method, a dipping method, and a spray method, or printing by print processes, such as the Taira version, letterpress, an intaglio, a mimeograph, a screen, and an imprint, and forming the light absorption film may be used. In this case, the inorganic system matrix material creation approach by the sol gel process can also be used for formation of the light absorption film. [0060]

The electrochemical membrane formation technique, such as an electrodeposition process, an electrolytic polymerization method, and a micell electrolytic decomposition process (JP,63-243298,A), can be used. [0061]

Furthermore, Lang Mia Blodgett's technique which moves the monomolecular film made to form on water can be used.

[0062]

As an approach of using the polymerization thru/or polycondensation reaction of a raw material monomer, when a monomer is a liquid, the casting method, the reaction injection mold method, a plasma polymerization method, a photopolymerization method, etc. are mentioned. [0063]

Approaches, such as a sublimation replica method, vacuum deposition, vacuum evaporation technique, the ion beam method, the sputtering method, a plasma polymerization method, a CVD method, and organic molecular-beam vacuum deposition, can also be used.

Spray into a high vacuum container from the spraying nozzle which prepared the organic system optical material of two or more components for every component in the state of a solution or dispersion liquid, it is made to deposit on a substrate, and the manufacture approach (patent official report No. 2599569) of the compound-die optical thin film characterized by heat-treating can also be used. [0064]

The above creation approaches of the solid light absorption film can be suitably used, also when creating the incubation layer membrane which consists of solid organic polymeric materials.

Subsequently, when creating the heat lens formative layer using the thermoplastic resin for optics, the heat lens formation component of the configuration of "a heat transfer layer membrane / the light absorption film / heat lens formative layer / light absorption film / heat transfer layer membrane" can be created using vacuum hot pressing (JP,4-99609,A). That is, the laminating mold thin film of the above-mentioned configuration can be created by inserting the powder or sheet of the resin for thermoplastic optics by the heat transfer layer membrane (glass plate) of two sheets in which the light absorption film was formed on the front face, and carrying out hot press under a high vacuum by the above-mentioned approach. [0066]

[The ingredient and the creation approach] of a gradient index lens

Although the laminating of the gradient index lens as a convergence means of said control light may be carried out and it may be prepared in the incidence side of said control light through the light transmission layer, what of arbitration is well-known as the ingredient and the creation approach of this gradient index lens can be used for the heat lens formation component used by this invention.

[0067]

For example, [M. which can create the gradient index lens of a refractive-index distribution pattern with the organic macromolecule system quality of the material using osmosis and the diffusion phenomenon of a monomer Oikawa, KIga, T.Sanada:Jpn.J.Appl.Phys, and 20(1) L51-L54(1981)]. That is, with a monomer exchange technique, a refractive-index distribution lens can be made on a flat substrate at a monolithic, for example, the methyl methacrylate (n= 1.494) as low refractive-index plastics is diffused into the flat plastic plate of Pori isophthalic acid JIAKURIRU (n= 1.570) which has a high refractive index from the surroundings of the mask of the circular disk of 3.6mmphi.

Moreover, [M. which can use the diffusion phenomenon of inorganic ion and can create the gradient index lens of a refractive-index distribution pattern with the inorganic textile-glass-yarn quality of the material Oikawa, KIga: Appl.Opt. and 21(6)1052-1056(1982)]. That is, in preparing the fenestera rotunda before and behind the diameter of 100 micrometers by the technique of a photolithography, soaking in fused salt, and making refractive-index distribution form according to the ion exchange, after attaching a mask to a glass substrate, the diameter of 0.9mm, the focal distance of 2mm, and the lens of numerical-aperture NA=0.23 can be made to form by impressing electric field over several hours and promoting the ion exchange.

[0069]

[Count of a beam waist diameter]

In order to use a thermal lensing effect effectively in the optical path transfer device and the optical path change approach of this invention, it is desirable to set up the configuration and magnitude of a beam cross section of said signal light and said control light, respectively so that the beam cross-sectional area of said signal light in the field where the photon density near the focus (condense point) is the highest, i.e., a "beam waist", may not exceed the beam cross-sectional area of said control light in a beam waist.

Hereafter, the case where it is the Gaussian beam from which the amplitude distribution of the electric field of a travelling direction beam cross section, i.e., the energy distribution of the flux of light, is Gaussian

distribution is described. In addition, although the following explanation explains the case where a condenser lens (gradient index lens) is used as a beam convergence means, it is the same even if convergence means are a concave mirror and a refractive-index distributed lens. [0071]

The situation of the bundle of rays in about 301 focus when completing the Gaussian beam by aperture angle 2theta with the condenser lenses 31, such as <u>drawing 1</u>, etc. and a wave front 300 is shown in <u>drawing 12</u>. Here, the location where the diameter of 20mega of the Gaussian beam of wavelength lambda becomes min is called "beam waist." It is a following and beam waist diameter 20mega 0 It shall express. It is 0 20mega because of a diffraction operation of light. It does not become zero but has the value of finite. In addition, beam-radius omega and omega 0 A definition is the distance when measuring the location where energy becomes 1 / e2 (e is the bottom of a natural logarithm) on the basis of the energy for a beam core of the Gaussian beam from a beam core, and a beam diameter is 20mega or 20mega0. It is expressed. Needless to say, at the core of a beam waist, a photon density is the highest.

In the case of the Gaussian beam, the beam flare angle theta in a distant place is fully wavelength lambda and the diameter omega 0 of a beam waist from a beam waist. It is connected by the following formula [1]. [0073]

[Equation 1]

Pi-theta-omega 0 ** lambda -- [1]

Here, pi is a circular constant.

[0074]

Diameter omega 0 of a beam waist condensed with the condenser lens from the numerical aperture and focal distance of beam-radius omega which restricts when fulfilling the conditions of "being fully a distant place from a beam waist", and carries out incidence to a condenser lens using this formula, and a condenser lens It is calculable.

[0075]

Furthermore, beam waist diameter 20mega0 at the time of generally completing the parallel Gaussian beam (wavelength lambda) of beam-radius omega with the condenser lens of the effective opening radius a and a numerical aperture NA It can express with the following formula [2].

[0076]

[Equation 2]

2omega0 ** K-lambda/NA -- [2]

[0077]

Here, since it cannot solve algebraically, a multiplier k can be determined by performing numerical-analysis count about the optical intensity distribution in a lens image formation side.

[υυ/8]

If the ratio of the effective opening radius a of beam-radius omega which carries out incidence, and a condenser lens is changed into a condenser lens and numerical-analysis count is performed, the value of the multiplier k of a formula [2] can be found as follows.

[0079]

[Equation 3]

A/omega = 1 At the time k**0.92

A/omega = 2 At the time $k^{**}1.3$

A/omega = 3 At the time k**1.9

A/omega = 4 At the time $k^{**}3$

[0080]

Namely, the more beam-radius omega is smaller than the effective opening radius a of a condenser lens, the more it is the diameter omega 0 of a beam waist. It becomes large.
[0081]

For example, if beam-radius omega which carries out incidence to a condenser lens is 5mm when signal light with a wavelength of 780nm is converged using a lens with a numerical aperture [0.25] and an effective opening radius of about 5mm as a condenser lens, a/omega is about 1, and it is the radius omega 0 of a beam waist. If 1.4 micrometers and omega are 1.25mm, a/omega is omega 0 at about 4. It is calculated with 4.7 micrometers. If beam-radius omega is 5mm when control light with a wavelength of 633nm is converged similarly, a/omega is about 1, and it is the radius omega 0 of a beam waist. If 1.2 micrometers and omega are 1.25mm, a/omega is omega 0 at about 4. It is calculated with 3.8 micrometers.

[0082]

What is necessary is just to expand a beam diameter until the intensity distribution of the light beam which carries out incidence to a condenser lens become close to a plane wave in order for the photon density near the focus of a condenser lens to make min the cross-sectional area of the light beam in the highest field, i.e., a beam waist, so that clearly from this example of count (beam expanded). Moreover, it also turns out that the diameter of a beam waist becomes small, so that the wavelength of light is short, when the beam diameter which carries out incidence to a condenser lens is the same.

[0083]

As mentioned above, in order to use a thermal lensing effect effectively in the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention, it is desirable to set up the configuration and magnitude of a beam cross section of said signal light and said control light, respectively so that the beam cross-sectional area of said signal light in the field where the photon density near the beam waist is the highest may not exceed the beam cross-sectional area of said control light in a beam waist. If it is the case where signal light and control light use the Gaussian beam, according to the above explanation and a formula, in the state of the collimated beam before converging with convergence means, such as a condenser lens According to wavelength, carry out beam expanded of the beam diameter of signal light and control light if needed, and by adjusting The beam cross-sectional area of said signal light in the field where the photon density near the beam waist is the highest can be prevented from exceeding the beam cross-sectional area of said control light in a beam waist. The optical system of the Kevlar mold which consists of a well-known thing, for example, two convex lenses, as a beam expanded means can be used.

[Count of confocal distance Zc]

Generally, in the case of the Gaussian beam, in the section of confocal distance Zc, it can consider mostly that a convergence beam is parallel light [near the beam waist of the flux of light which it converged with convergence means, such as a convex lens, (i.e., a focus)], and confocal distance Zc is a circular constant pi and the beam waist radius omega 0. And it can express with the formula [3] using wavelength lambda. [0085]

[Equation 4]

Zc = piomega0 2 / lambda -- [3]

omega 0 of a formula [3] Substitution of a formula [2] obtains a formula (4).

[0086]

[Equation 5]

Zc ** pi (k/NA) 2 lambda/4 -- [4]

[0087]

For example, if beam-radius omega which carries out incidence to a condenser lens is 5mm when signal light with a wavelength of 780nm is converged using a lens with a numerical aperture [0.25] and an effective opening radius of about 5mm as a condenser lens, a/omega is about 1, and it is the radius omega 0 of a beam waist. For 1.4 micrometers and confocal distance Zc, if 8.3 micrometers and omega are 1.25mm, a/omega is omega 0 at about 4. 4.7 micrometers and confocal distance Zc are calculated with 88 micrometers. If beam-radius omega is 5mm when control light with a wavelength of 633nm is converged similarly, a/omega is about 1, and it is the radius omega 0 of a beam waist. For 1.2 micrometers and confocal distance Zc, if 6.7 micrometers and omega are 1.25mm, a/omega is omega 0 at about 4. 3.8 micrometers and confocal distance Zc are calculated with 71 micrometers.

[Numerical aperture of a condenser lens and a light-receiving lens]

Although it is irradiating so that signal light and control light may be completed with a condenser lens on the same axle and a focus may be connected into a heat lens formation component in the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of this invention When receiving the light which carries out outgoing radiation at a larger aperture include angle than usual from a heat lens formation component with a light-receiving lens and collimating in parallel light, it is the numerical aperture (it is hereafter referred to as NA.) of this light-receiving lens. Setting up so that it may become larger than NA of a condenser lens is recommended. Furthermore, NA of a light-receiving lens has the desirable more than twice of NA of a condenser lens. However, when the effective opening radius a of a condenser lens is large (namely, a/omega> 1) from beam-radius omega which carries out incidence to a condenser lens, the substantial numerical aperture of a condenser lens is smaller than the numerical aperture of a condenser lens. Therefore, the numerical aperture of a light-receiving lens is larger than the substantial numerical aperture of

a condenser lens instead of condenser lens numerical aperture, and it is desirable to set up more than twice. Even if expanded more than to the twice at the time of the beam diameter of signal light carrying out incidence of the NA of a light-receiving lens to a heat lens formation component by making it into twice [more than] NA of a condenser lens, it becomes possible to receive light without loss. [0089]

[The optimal thickness of a light absorption layer membrane]

Thickness of 1 which constitutes a light absorption layer membrane, or the light absorption film of two sheets was not changed, but heat lens formation layer thickness was changed, and the sample was produced, and as a result of experimenting about two or more heat lens formation components from which thickness differs by optical-density regularity, when it was made twice the confocal distance Zc calculated as mentioned above into the upper limit of the thickness of a light absorption layer membrane, it turned out that the optical speed of response of a thermal lensing effect becomes a high speed enough.

About the minimum of the thickness of a light absorption layer membrane, as long as a thermal lensing effect can be demonstrated, as thin, it is more desirable.

[0091]

[Thickness of an incubation layer membrane]

An optimum value (a lower limit and upper limit) which makes the magnitude and/or the rate of an optical response max exists in the thickness of an incubation layer membrane. The value can be experimentally determined according to the quality of the material of the quality of the material of the configuration of a heat lens formation component, and a light absorption layer membrane and thickness, and an incubation layer membrane, the quality of the material of a heat transfer layer membrane, thickness, etc. As a heat transfer layer membrane, as the quality of the material of usual borosilicate glass, an incubation layer membrane, and the heat lens formative layer For example, a polycarbonate, as the light absorption film -- the vacuum evaporation film of a platinum phthalocyanine -- using -- glass (a heat transfer layer membrane --) 150 micrometers of thickness, a polycarbonate resin layer (incubation layer) / platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film (the light absorption film --) 0.2 micrometers of thickness, a polycarbonate resin layer (heat lens formative layer, 20 micrometers of thickness) / platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporation of film (the light absorption film --) When the heat lens formation component of the configuration of 0.2 micrometers of thickness, a polycarbonate resin layer (incubation layer) / glass (a heat transfer layer membrane, 150 micrometers of thickness) is created, preferably, from 5nm, the thickness of an incubation layer membrane is 5 micrometers, and is 50nm to 500nm still more preferably.

[Thickness of a heat transfer layer membrane]

An optimum value (in this case, lower limit) which makes the magnitude and/or the rate of an optical response max exists also in the thickness of a heat transfer layer membrane. The value can be experimentally determined according to the quality of the material of the quality of the material of the quality of the material of the configuration of a heat lens formation component, and a light absorption layer membrane and thickness, and an incubation layer and thickness, and a heat transfer layer membrane etc. As a heat transfer layer membrane, as the quality of the material of usual borosilicate glass, an incubation layer membrane, and the heat lens formative layer For example, a polycarbonate, as the light absorption film -the vacuum evaporationo film of a platinum phthalocyanine -- using -- glass (a heat transfer layer membrane --) 150 micrometers of thickness, a polycarbonate resin layer (incubation layer) / platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film (the light absorption film --) 0.2 micrometers of thickness, a polycarbonate resin layer (heat lens formative layer, 20 micrometers of thickness) / platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film (the light absorption film --) When the heat lens formation component of the configuration of 0.2 micrometers of thickness, a polycarbonate resin layer (incubation layer) / glass (a heat transfer layer membrane, 150 micrometers of thickness) is created, 10 micrometers of minimums of the thickness of a heat transfer layer membrane are 100 micrometers still more preferably preferably. In addition, although there is nothing, the constraint from the magnitude and/or the rate of the optical response about the upper limit of the thickness of a heat transfer layer membrane needs to make consistency have with the method of the condenser lens used and a light-receiving lens, a focal distance, and the working distance (working distance), and it is necessary to design it. [0093]

[Example]

Hereafter, the operation gestalt of this invention is explained to a detail, referring to an example.

[0094]

[Example 1]

The outline configuration of the optical-path transfer device of an example 1 is shown in <u>drawing 1</u>. The optical-path transfer device of <u>drawing 1</u> illustrates the case where the optical-path change unit which consists of "the control light light source, a dichroic mirror, a condenser lens, a heat lens formation component, a light-receiving lens, and a mirror with a hole" is connected with a three-step serial. Although there will be especially no limit if the connectivity number of an optical-path change unit is one or more pieces theoretically, the number of stages which can be connected in fact from the permeability of the signal light per one step of optical-path change unit, the early age strength of the signal light which carries out incidence to an optical-path transfer device, and signal light reinforcement required for the last target is calculated. For example, if the permeability per one step of optical-path change unit is 80%, the comprehensive permeability in three-step serial connection will become 51%.

Hereafter, the optical-path transfer device of the three-step serial configuration shown in <u>drawing 1</u> is made into an example, and is explained to a detail. In addition, the partial diagrammatic view which added the light-receiving lens 41 and the mirror 61 with a hole for the partial diagrammatic view which extracted the parts of the condenser lens 31 in <u>drawing 1</u> and the heat lens formation component 1 to <u>drawing 2</u> and <u>drawing 3</u> further is shown in <u>drawing 4</u>. In <u>drawing 1</u> thru/or <u>drawing 4</u>, although the heat lens formation component 1 is illustrated as the three-tiered structure "heat transfer layer membrane 91 / light absorption layer membrane 92 / heat transfer layer membrane 93", it is not limited to this.

the incidence signal light 110 from an optical fiber 100 -- a collimate lens 30 -- 5.0mm of beam radii -- he is trying to become a parallel ray mostly In this example, semiconductor laser with an oscillation wavelength of 780nm is used as the light source of signal light. The oscillation wavelength of 1350nm and 1550nm semiconductor laser light may be used. In this example, each is changing the signal light optical path to the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3 by intermittence of control light, using semiconductor laser with an oscillation wavelength of 650nm as the control light sources 21, 22, and 23 of the control light 121,122 and 123 for making a heat lens form respectively. Beam shaping is carried out and the control light 121,122 and 123 uses so that each may become the parallel ray of 4.5mm of beam radii. The laser power of the control light light source may be 2 thru/or 10mW also in which this side of condenser lenses 31, 32, or 33.

[0097]

The control light 121,122 and 123 and the signal light 110,111 and 112 are respectively completed with the common condenser lenses 31, 32, and 33, and it is irradiating to the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Signal light and control light are adjusted so that the same optical axis, and signal light and control light may become parallel mutually using dichroic mirrors 51, 52, and 53, so that each beam waists of control light and signal light may overlap mutually in a heat lens formation component. By doing in this way, it becomes possible to use efficiently for travelling direction modification of signal light the thermal lensing effect formed of the light absorption in a control light beam waist location. [0098]

If laser light is condensed with a lens, the optical intensity distribution in a beam waist (a condensing point; focus) will turn into Gaussian distribution. The heat lens formation component containing said light absorption film is irradiated through a condenser lens by making into control light laser light of the wavelength band absorbed by the light absorption film, if it is made to converge in the light absorption layer membrane containing the heat lens formative layer, the light absorption film will absorb laser light, the temperature of the heat lens formative layer rises, consequently a refractive index falls. If the light which carried out Gaussian distribution as mentioned above is irradiated, the place where it converged at and a part for the core of Gaussian distribution with strong optical reinforcement was irradiated will take "the lead in light absorption", and the temperature of the part will become [a refractive index] the smallest most highly. It functions like [the distribution to which the refractive index of the light absorption layer membrane which contains the heat lens formative layer with the heat which the light absorption turned to a periphery from a part for the core of light absorption changes to heat, and is spread further around changes spherically towards the exterior from a light absorption core, and a refractive index becomes high towards / the refractive index based on light absorption is low, and / the exterior is produced, and 1 a concave lens in this. That is, the velocity of light in case light passes through the place where a part for the core of Gaussian distribution with strong optical reinforcement was irradiated greatly [a rate] therefore in a place smaller

than the large place of a refractive index is larger than the velocity of light when passing through the place where the circumference part of Gaussian distribution with optical weak reinforcement was irradiated. Therefore, it turns at light in the direction in which the circumference part of Gaussian distribution with optical weak reinforcement was irradiated. This is the same actuation as the concave lens in the inside of atmospheric air.

[0099]

In this example, the signal light which passed the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3 is mostly collimated in parallel light with the light-receiving lenses 41, 42, and 43. The numerical aperture (hereafter referred to as NA.) of this light-receiving lens is set up so that it may become larger than NA of a condenser lens. In NA of a condenser lens, in this example, NA of 0.25 and a light-receiving lens uses 0.55. NA of a light-receiving lens has the desirable more than twice of NA of a condenser lens. If this relation is satisfied, the combination of NA of a condenser lens and a collimate lens will not be restricted to this example. Even if expanded more than to the twice at the time of the beam diameter of signal light carrying out incidence of the NA of a light-receiving lens to a heat lens formation component by making it into twice [more than] NA of a condenser lens, it becomes possible to receive light without loss. In addition, in this example, it presupposed that the focal distance of a condenser lens and a light-receiving lens is the same, and the effective diameter of a condenser lens used about 10mm thing.

[0100]

Incidence of the signal light which collimated with the light-receiving lenses 41, 42, and 43 is carried out to the mirrors 61, 62, and 63 with a hole. It becomes possible to change the optical path of signal light by preparing this mirror with a hole so that it may explain to a detail later.

[0101]

If coincidence is irradiated so that a focus may be connected [in / for the control light of the wavelength in the absorption band region of a light absorption layer membrane, and the signal light which is the wavelength of a transparency band / the location 5 near the plane of incidence of the light absorption layer membrane of the heat lens formation component 1] as shown in drawing.2 (a) With the heat lens 50 formed in the location near plane of incidence of control light as shown in drawing.3 (a), outgoing radiation of the signal light is carried out at the larger aperture include angle as an outgoing radiation light 201 diffused so that a cross section might spread in the shape of a ring than the usual outgoing radiation light 200. Outgoing radiation is carried out as an outgoing radiation light 117 on which it converged signal light with the heat lens 60 formed in the location near an outgoing radiation side of control light as it was shown in drawing.3 (b), when coincidence was irradiated so that a focus may be connected [in / as shown in drawing.2 (b) on the other hand / the location 6 near the outgoing radiation side of the light absorption layer membrane of a heat lens formation component]. If neither of drawing.2 (a) and drawing.2 (b) of the cases irradiates control light, as a dotted line shows, only signal light will carry out outgoing radiation of the signal light to drawing.3 (a) and drawing.3 (b) as an outgoing radiation light 200 of the usual aperture include angle, without being influenced of the heat lenses 50 or 60.

[0102]

In order to investigate such a thermal lensing effect, the difference of the optical intensity distribution in the signal light beam cross section corresponding to the existence of a thermal lensing effect and a difference of a condensing point location was measured. Namely, in the equipment which shows an outline to drawing 1 or drawing 4, it considers as the numerical aperture 0.55 of the light-receiving lens 41, and the numerical aperture 0.25 of a condenser lens 31. The optical intensity-distribution measuring instrument 700 as shows an outline to drawing 7 instead of the mirror 61 with a hole is installed. All the signal light beams that penetrated the heat lens formation component 1 were received with the light-receiving lens 41, incidence was carried out as a parallel ray to the light sensing portion 701 (effective diameter of 20mm) of said optical intensity-distribution measuring instrument, and the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section were measured. A measurement result is shown in drawing 8, drawing 9, and drawing 10. As an optical intensity-distribution measuring instrument is shown in drawing 7, the first slit 702 with a width of face of 1mm is formed to a light sensing portion 701 (effective diameter of 20mm) here. In the die-length direction of the first slit, i.e., drawing 7, to the sense of a point 710 to the point 720 It is equipment which move the second slit 703 with a width of face of 25 micrometers with constant speed, and the luminous intensity which passed the aperture of the rectangle which is 1mmx25micrometer which the slit of two sheets makes is made to correspond to the migration location of said aperture, and is measured. What is necessary is just to record the output of the detector which received the light which passed said aperture on the storage oscilloscope synchronized with the passing speed of the second slit 703, in order to make it

correspond to the migration location of said aperture and to measure optical reinforcement. Drawing 8 - drawing 10 show the optical intensity distribution about the light beam cross section of the signal light recorded on the storage oscilloscope as mentioned above, an axis of abscissa (location in a light beam cross section) corresponds to the location which the core of a light sensing portion 701 was set to 0, the negative direction was defined for the point 710 of drawing 7, it defined the forward direction and the coordinate for the point 720, and was expressed, and an axis of ordinate expresses optical reinforcement.

Drawing 8 is the optical intensity distribution of said signal light beam cross section when it corresponds in the case of drawing 4 (a), and control light does not carry out incidence to the heat lens formation component 1 but only signal light carries out incidence. The optical intensity distribution in this case are distribution (in general "Gaussian distribution") in which reinforcement becomes weaker as the reinforcement for a core is strong and goes on the outskirts. Therefore, if the mirror 61 with a hole which has the hole 161 of magnitude sufficient in this case is installed like drawing 4 (a), all the signal light beams 111 can pass through the hole 161 of a mirror with a hole. If the beam diameter of the signal light here with d1 and the light-receiving lens 41 (focal distance f2) in the beam diameter of the signal light which carries out incidence to a condenser lens 31 (focal distance f1) as an parallel light is set to d2,

```
[Equation 6]
f1: f2=d1:d2 -- [5]
It comes out, and since it is, d2 can be calculated by the following formula.
[0104]
[Equation 7]
d2=(f2/f1) xd1 -- [6]
[0105]
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By this example 1, the mirror 61 with a hole has the optical axis of signal light, and the include angle of 45 degrees, and is installed. Moreover, the cross section of the signal light which passes through a hole 161 is circular. Therefore, the configuration of a hole 161 needs to be the ellipse of a minor axis D1 and a major axis D2, and D1 and D2 have the relation of the following formula [7].

[0106] [Equation 8] D2=D1xroot2 -- [7]

[0107]

Here, the minor axis D1 of the ellipse form hole 161 of the mirror 61 with a hole should be just larger than the beam diameter d2 of the signal light beam 111 called for from a formula [6]. However, if D1 is too large, a part of signal light expanded in the shape of a ring by the exposure of control light will pass. That is, it is d1.02 times 2 and 1.2 times the optimum value of D1 of this, and is it more preferably. [of this] [1.01 times thru/or 1.1 times]

[0108]

In this example 1, the focal distance f1 of a condenser lens 31 and the focal distance f2 of the light-receiving lens 41 presupposed that it is the same. Therefore, beam diameter d<SUB>2 of the signal light 111 made into parallel light with the beam diameter d1 and light-receiving lens of the signal light 110 which carries out incidence to a condenser lens 31 are the same, and they are 10mm as mentioned above. Therefore, 10.2mm thru/or 12mm are desirable, and is 10.1mm thru/or 11mm more preferably, and the minor axis D1 of the ellipse form hole 161 of the mirror 61 with a hole in this example 1 could be 10.5mm in fact. D2 is 14.8mm from a formula [7]. Moreover, the thing of the magnitude (50mm angle) which can 45-degree reflect a beam with a diameter of 30mm was used for the size of a mirror.

Drawing 9 is the optical intensity distribution of the signal light beam cross section when setting a focus (condensing point) as the location 5 (incidence side of light) near the condenser lens 31 of the heat lens formation component 1, and irradiating control light. The optical reinforcement for a core of the optical intensity distribution in this case is weak, and they are the distribution to which optical reinforcement increases in the shape of a ring on the outskirts. The optical reinforcement of the core of a signal light beam cross section decreases depending on the physical relationship of control light reinforcement and the heat lens formation component 1, and a focus, it is as its control light reinforcement increases, and it approaches zero. Moreover, the maximum location of signal light reinforcement was a bigger value (diameter of about 15mm) than the original beam diameter.

[0110]

Use of the thermal lensing effect corresponding to <u>drawing 10</u> is indicated in the example 2. [0111]

As mentioned above, if it collects, in optical arrangement of <u>drawing 3</u> (a), it corresponds to the existence of a control light exposure. The optical intensity distribution of the beam cross section of the signal light which passed the heat lens formation component are changed to ring-like distribution of <u>drawing 9</u> between the Gaussian distribution of <u>drawing 8</u> (when it is a control **** exposure). (when it is a control light exposure) The change of the optical path of signal light is attained by taking this out separately, respectively by the mirror with a hole which suited the configuration of the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section.

[0112]

By this example 1, the mirror 61 with a hole has the optical axis of signal light, and the include angle of 45 degrees, and is installed. the mirror side of the mirror 61 with a hole -- a glass side top -- the aluminum film -- a spatter -- or it vapor-deposited and created. The ellipse-like hole was leaned 45 degrees to glass, was made in it, and the part of the hole 161 of the mirror 61 with a hole created it on it. It is more desirable to make a hole, since a glass side has several % reflection and attenuation and the cross talk of signal light happen instead of making a hole, although it is not necessary to attach the aluminum reflective film in the shape of an ellipse. moreover, the ingredient with which the reflective film has reflection not only in aluminum but in the control light which uses and signal light -- be -- **** may be good and gold, silver, etc. are sufficient.

[0113]

the signal light (switch signal light) 211,212 and 213 which it turned 90 degrees and was taken out from the travelling direction since signal Mitsumoto by optical-path change condenses with condenser lenses 71, 72, and 73, and carries out incidence to optical fibers 11, 12, and 13.

[0114]

the case where all the light sources 21, 22, and 23 of control light have gone out -- signal light -- a thermal lensing effect -- not winning popularity -- the signal light 111,112 -- subsequently outgoing radiation is carried out as 113. The outgoing radiation signal light 113 is condensed with a condenser lens 40, and incidence is carried out to an optical fiber 101.

[0115]

In addition, incidence is carried out to a detector etc. instead of optical fibers 11, 12, 13, or 101, and information may be changed into an electrical signal and may be taken out.

Here, unless the permeability of the control light in the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3 is 0%, the control light of the part equivalent to permeability also penetrates and carries out outgoing radiation of the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3. In order to avoid that this control light carries out incidence to a latter heat lens formation component, and raises malfunction thru/or a cross talk, it is necessary to bring the permeability of the control light in the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3 to 0% close infinite. Furthermore, it is desirable to prepare a wavelength selection transparency filter (not shown) the back of the heat lens formation components 1, 2, and 3 or behind condenser lenses 41, 42, and 43. As these wavelength selection transparency filters, the light of the wavelength band of control light is intercepted completely, and on the other hand, if it is the wavelength selection transparency filter which can penetrate the light of the wavelength band of signal light efficiently, the thing of well-known arbitration can be used. For example, plastics and glass which were colored with coloring matter, the glass which prepared the dielectric multilayer vacuum evaporationo film in the front face can be used. The thin film which consists of such a charge of wavelength selection transparency filter material may be formed in the front face of condenser lenses 41, 42, and 43 by technique, such as a coating method and the sputtering method, and the function as said wavelength selection transparency filter may be demonstrated. [0117]

The optical-path transfer device of this example connects with a three-step serial the optical-path change unit which consists of "the control light light source, a dichroic mirror, a condenser lens, a heat lens formation component, a light-receiving lens, and a mirror with a hole." Therefore, it receives that signal light goes straight on and carries out incidence to an optical fiber 101 when all control light is switched off. When the signal light 211 switches off the control light 21 to an optical fiber 11 when the control light 21 is turned on, and the control light 22 is turned on to it, the signal light 212 to an optical fiber 12 Furthermore,

when the control light 21 and 22 is switched off and the control light 23 is turned on, an optical path is

changed to an optical fiber 13, and the signal light 213 carries out outgoing radiation to it. [0118]

The sectional view which expresses the outline configuration with <u>drawing 6</u> for the heat lens formation component 1 used by this example 1 as a heat lens formation component 600 is shown. With a condenser lens 610, it is condensed and the signal light 608 and the control light 609 are irradiated to the heat lens formation component 600. In addition, the beam of light of the control light 609 shown in <u>drawing 6</u> is typical, and refraction between class film is omitted.

The heat lens formation component 600 of the configuration of heat transfer layer membrane 601 / light absorption film 603 / heat lens formative layer 605 / light absorption film 604 / heat transfer layer membrane 602 shown in drawing 6 can be created in the following procedures.

Inside the vacuum housing for substrate washing connected to the vacuum evaporation system via the gate valve, the main wavelength of 185nm, The ultraviolet ray lamp of output 5W two LGTs and the main wavelength of 254nm, and ultraviolet ray lamp 2 LGT of output 5W It attaches by arrangement ultraviolet rays are irradiated by whose substrate front face. A glass plate (24mmx30mmx0.15mm) as a substrate (heat transfer layer membranes 601 and 602) One or more sheets, After carrying in, the pure nitrogen gas which passed the gas filter which carries out uptake of the particle with a diameter of 0.05 micrometers 100% is filled under atmospheric pressure inside a vacuum housing. The oxygen gas which passed the gas filter which carries out uptake of the particle with a diameter of 0.05 micrometers 100% after defecating an ambient atmosphere until suspending dust (diameter of 0.1 micrometers or more) and stain resistance gas are no longer detected inside is introduced. After raising the oxygen density to 60% or more, the ultraviolet ray lamp was turned on, and the UV irradiation processing and ozonization on the front face of a substrate were performed over 1 hour. After exhausting the interior for substrate washing of a vacuum housing after the above purification processing termination and changing into the high vacuum condition of 10 - 4 or less Pa, similarly the substrate was transported into the vacuum evaporation system of the high vacuum condition of 10 - 4 or less Pa. The platinum phthalocyanine (empirical formula C32H16N8 Pt) beforehand introduced into the source of vacuum evaporationo was heated with resistance wire, it heated to 600 degrees C, and vacuum deposition was carried out to up to the above-mentioned substrate. Especially control of substrate temperature was not performed. It acted as the monitor of the advance of vacuum evaporation by the quartz-resonator type thickness gage, when thickness reached 0.2 micrometers, the shutter of the source of vacuum evaporationo was closed, and vacuum evaporationo was ended.

Thus, when the scanning electron microscope photograph of the vacuum evaporation film front face created on the substrate was taken, it turned out that the platinum phthalocyanine which carried out vacuum deposition on the above-mentioned conditions exists in the state of an outer diameter 30 thru/or a 50nm particle. This particle diameter is less than [of the wavelength (780nm) of the signal light in this example 1, and the wavelength (633nm) of control light] 1/10, and is magnitude which does not cause light scattering. [0122]

while, agitating the solution which dissolved 1g (Teijin formation bread-making light L1250 (trademark)) of polycarbonate resin in dichloromethane 19g on the other hand -- n-hexane 300ml -- it flowed into inside, the depositing resin pellet was filtered, it washed in n-hexane 30ml, and the solvent was removed in pure air, and it ground so that a particle outer diameter might become less than 50-micrometer impalpable powder. This polycarbonate resin impalpable powder was gradually heated among the high vacuum container of 10 - 4 or less Pa, and degassing processing was carried out in the 100 to 120 degrees C temperature requirement for 48 hours.

[0123]

Under a pure ambient atmosphere on the platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film on the glass substrate created previously Sprinkle the resin impalpable powder which carried out high vacuum degassing processing, and the platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film on one more glass substrate is placed in piles on it. It places on the heating stage which installed this in the high vacuum container, exhausts to 10 - 4 or less Pa, and heats to 240 thru/or 260 degrees C, the pressure plate heated to 240 thru/or 260 degrees C on the other hand is pushed, and it is 5 kgf/cm2. The vacuum hotpress was performed by the pressure.

[0124]

With the above procedure, the laminating type heat lens formation component of the configuration of glass

(the heat transfer layer membrane 601, 150 micrometers of thickness) / platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film (the light absorption film 603, 0.2 micrometers of thickness) / polycarbonate resin layer (the heat lens formative layer 605, 20 micrometers of thickness) / platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporationo film (the light absorption film 604, 0.2 micrometers of thickness) / glass (the heat transfer layer membrane 602, 150 micrometers of thickness) was created. The permeability of this heat lens formation component was [light / with a wavelength of 780nm / signal] 0.09% (as a matter of fact 0%) about control light with a wavelength of 633nm 81%.

In addition, the thickness of the heat lens formative layer was controlled by adjusting whenever [irrelevance / of resin powder /, and stoving temperature], and, pressure treatment time amount (from several minutes to several hours).

[0126]

In order to measure the optical speed of response of the optical-path transfer device of this example 1, signal light was made into continuation light, on the other hand, control light was irradiated as a square wave chopped-light line of a duty ratio 1:1 by the frequency of several Hz to 100kHz, and the size of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude by which the optical-path change was carried out was compared. [0127]

the wave of the control light which led the control light 121 from the control light light source 21 shown in drawing 1 to the photodetector, and was measured on the oscilloscope -- the wave of the signal light which led to the photodetector the signal light 211 by which the optical-path change was carried out corresponding to blinking of 1210 and the control light 121, and was measured on the oscilloscope -- 2110 is shown in drawing 13 and drawing 14. In addition, the axis of ordinate of drawing 14 is expanded by 3 times in the case of drawing 13. moreover, the wave of the signal light corresponding to [set the frequency of the square wave which is intermittent in the control light 121 as 200Hz thru/or 100kHz, and] intermittence of the signal light at that time -- the result of having measured the amplitude L of 2110 is shown in drawing 15.

[0128]

the wave of the signal light corresponding to [are 500Hz in frequency of the square wave which is intermittent in the control light 121 (<u>drawing 1</u>) in <u>drawing 13</u> , and] intermittence of the signal light at this time -- when the amplitude L of 2110 was set to 1 of criteria, in 2kHz, the amplitude L was about 1 from the frequency range 0.2 of the square wave which is intermittent in the control light 121 (<u>drawing 1</u>). That is, it was checked in 500 microseconds that a perfect optical-path change is possible. This is the high-speed response of more than twice compared with the optical switch (a speed of response is ms order) using the thermooptic effect which used the electric heater.

furthermore, the wave of signal light [in / as an example at the time of raising a frequency / the frequency of 20kHz] -- 2110 is shown in <u>drawing 14</u>. If control light is switched off before the optical-path change by the thermal lensing effect is completed so that <u>drawing 14</u> may show, the wave of signal light becomes the shape of a cutting edge of a saw, and the amplitude L becomes small. That is, if the speed of response of a thermal lensing effect is exceeded, the change of an optical path will become imperfect, and a part of signal light goes straight on, without carrying out an optical-path change. [0130]

In order to measure the endurance of the optical-path transfer device of this example 1, signal light was made into continuation light, on the other hand, control light was irradiated as a square wave chopped-light line of a duty ratio 1:1 by 1kHz of frequency numbers, and the time amount of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude by which the optical-path change was carried out was compared. Consequently, even if 10,000 hours passed continuously, the signal luminous-intensity amplitude was not decreased.

Although the experiment to which the polarizing element of one sheet is inserted in signal light and control light, and various polarization angles are changed was conducted in order to verify the polarization dependency of the optical-path transfer device of this example 1, the polarization dependency was not accepted at all.

[0132]

[Example 2]

<u>Drawing 10</u> showing an example of the optical intensity distribution in a signal light beam cross section is the optical intensity distribution of the signal light beam cross section when corresponding in optical

arrangement as shown in <u>drawing 3</u> (b) and <u>drawing 11</u> (b), setting it as the location 6 (outgoing radiation side of light) near the light-receiving lens 41 of the heat lens formation component 1 which shows a focus (condensing point) to <u>drawing 2</u> (b), and irradiating control light. In this case, the optical reinforcement for a core is stronger than the optical reinforcement for a core when not irradiating control light (<u>drawing 8</u>). In this case, the optical reinforcement of the core of a signal light beam cross section reaches also several times at the time of a control **** exposure, although it is dependent on the physical relationship of control light reinforcement and the heat lens formation component 1, and a focus 6.

Therefore, if the mirror 61 with a hole is installed in this case, most signal light beams will pass through the hole 161 of a mirror with a hole. Here, if magnitude of the hole 161 of the mirror 61 with a hole is optimized (diameter of 2mm when it is this example 2), signal light reflected by the mirror 61 with a hole can be made into zero as a matter of fact. However, even if it optimizes the magnitude of the hole 161 of the mirror 61 with a hole, when not irradiating control light (drawing 4 (a), drawing 8), it cannot be prevented the amount of [of signal light as shown in drawing 11 (a)] core's passing through a hole 161 as a leakage signal light 116. That is, in the optical-path transfer device of this example 2, when the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section are close to Gaussian distribution thru/or Gaussian distribution, a certain amount of leakage signal light 116 (cross talk) surely occurs.

However, such a leakage signal light can be made into zero as a matter of fact by changing the optical intensity distribution of the signal light beam cross section which carries out incidence to a heat lens formation component. That is, as shown in drawing 1, in case the signal light 110 which carried out outgoing radiation is orthopedically operated using a collimate lens 30 from an optical fiber 100, making it distribution of the shape of a ring which is equivalent to drawing 9 can make easy the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section with devising the configuration (for example, use of a cone lens) or configuration (a convex lens and a concave lens putting together) of a lens. If it returns to a parallel ray with the light-receiving lens 41 after converging the signal light 110 of such cross-section light intensity distribution so that it may pass through the focal location 6 (drawing 11 (a)) with a condenser lens 31, and making the heat lens formation component 1 penetrate The optical intensity distribution of the light beam cross section are strong in a circumference part so that it may be equivalent to drawing 9, and since the amount of core becomes "the shape of a ring of zero" as a matter of fact, when the mirror 61 with a hole is installed, they can lose the leakage at bulb of the signal light which passes through the hole 161 as a matter of fact. Even if the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section are rings "-like" in this way, when it irradiates control light like drawing 4 (b) and the heat lens 60 is made to form transitionally, the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section pass through the hole 161 of the mirror 61 with a hole as a rectilinear-propagation convergence outgoing radiation signal light 111 of the shape of a sharp beam.

[0135]

By adjusting in optical arrangement which is illustrated to <u>drawing 11</u>, so that the focus of control light and signal light may become the location 6 near the outgoing radiation side of a heat lens formation component, and making the optical intensity distribution of a signal light beam cross section into the shape of a ring further signal light can be made to go straight on at the time of changing an optical path from the travelling direction since signal Mitsumoto 90 degrees, and carrying out outgoing radiation of the signal light, and a control light exposure at the time of a control **** exposure

In order to measure the optical speed of response of the optical-path transfer device of this example 2, signal light was made into continuation light, on the other hand, control light was irradiated as a square wave chopped-light line of a duty ratio 1:1 by the frequency of several Hz to 100kHz, and the size of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude by which the optical-path change was carried out was compared. Consequently, when the amplitude on the strength did not change to 2kHz but a frequency was further raised on the basis of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude at the time of 1Hz, the amplitude on the strength was decreased gradually and reduced by half at the time of 10kHz. That is, it was checked in 500 microseconds that a perfect optical-path change is possible. This is the high-speed response of more than twice compared with the optical switch using the thermooptic effect which used the electric heater.

In order to measure the endurance of the optical-path transfer device of this example 2, signal light was made into continuation light, on the other hand, control light was irradiated as a square wave chopped-light

line of a duty ratio 1:1 by 1kHz of frequency numbers, and the time amount of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude by which the optical-path change was carried out was compared. Consequently, even if 10,000 hours passed continuously, the signal luminous-intensity amplitude was not decreased. [0138]

[Example 3]

The include angle of the optical-path change to the optical axis of the signal light 110 can be changed about freely in 5 times to 175 degrees by changing the installation include angle (it being 45 degrees to the optical axis of the signal light 110) of the mirror 61 with a hole in an example 1, and calculating and determining the configuration (the die length of the major axis to a minor axis) of the ellipse-like hole 161 using a trigonometric function based on an installation include angle.

Moreover, the installation location of the mirror 61 with a hole can be rotated by the ability setting a revolving shaft as the optical axis of the signal light 110, and the direction of the optical-path change to the optical axis of the signal light 110 can be freely changed in 0 to 360 degrees also by moving the location of condenser lens 71 grade.

[0140]

[Example 4]

When the heat lens generator child created by the approach of a publication next was used instead of the heat lens formation component which made the platinum phthalocyanine vacuum evaporation film in an example 1 the light absorption layer membrane, and also the optical-path transfer device of this example 4 was created like the example 1 and the optical-path change approach was tried, the case of an example 1 and the result more than equivalent were able to be obtained.

[0141]

First, the polymer joint coloring matter which diazotizes a tetra-amino copper phthalocyanine in concentrated hydrochloric acid, adds a methyl methacrylate, methacrylic-acid butyl, and the monomer mixture (mole ratio 4:1:1) of methacrylic-acid 2-hydroxyethyl there, heats gradually, and contains a copper phthalocyanine was compounded (about 60% of weight of the copper-phthalocyanine part in [all] weight). After dissolving this in 2-butanone and removing an acid and the insoluble solution matter, it developed as a solvent in the column which used as the bulking agent the alumina (mean particle diameter of about 50 micrometers) to which it put into air and activity was reduced, and 2-butanone was refined in it. After having mixed this polymer joint coloring matter with polycarbonate resin in dichloromethane, having obtained the mixture of 0.5 % of the weight of contents of the polymer joint coloring matter to resin, removing the solvent and grinding in the shape of impalpable powder, in the high vacuum condition of 10 -4 or less Pa, from a room temperature to 200 degrees C, the temperature up was carried out gradually and degassing processing was carried out.

[0142]

On the other hand, inside the vacuum housing for substrate washing connected to the vacuum evaporation system via the gate valve, the main wavelength of 185nm, The ultraviolet ray lamp of output 5W two LGTs and the main wavelength of 254nm, and ultraviolet ray lamp 2 LGT of output 5W It attaches by arrangement ultraviolet rays are irradiated by whose substrate front face. A glass plate (24mmx30mmx0.15mm) as a substrate (heat transfer layer membranes 601 and 602) One or more sheets, After carrying in, the pure nitrogen gas which passed the gas filter which carries out uptake of the particle with a diameter of 0.05 micrometers 100% is filled under atmospheric pressure inside a vacuum housing. The oxygen gas which passed the gas filter which carries out uptake of the particle with a diameter of 0.05 micrometers 100% after defecating an ambient atmosphere until suspending dust (diameter of 0.1 micrometers or more) and stain resistance gas are no longer detected inside is introduced. After raising the oxygen density to 60% or more, the ultraviolet ray lamp was turned on, and the UV irradiation processing and ozonization on the front face of a substrate were performed over 1 hour. After exhausting the interior for substrate washing of a vacuum housing after the above purification processing termination and changing into the high vacuum condition of 10 - 4 or less Pa, similarly the substrate was transported into the vacuum hotpress equipment of the high vacuum condition of 10 - 4 or less Pa. [0143]

After placing the above-mentioned copper-phthalocyanine content polymer joint coloring matter and the mixed powder of a polycarbonate between the two above-mentioned glass plates which purified the front face and performing hotpress processing at 250 degrees C in the high vacuum condition of 10 - 4 or less Pa, it cooled to the room temperature.

[0144]

With the above procedure, the heat lens formation component of the configuration of the heat [a light absorption layer membrane-cum-] lens formative layer (25 micrometers of thickness) / glass (the heat transfer layer membrane 601, 150 micrometers of thickness) which consists of glass (the heat transfer layer membrane 601, 150 micrometers of thickness) / copper-phthalocyanine content polymer joint coloring matter, and mixture of a polycarbonate was created.

[0145]

In order to measure the optical speed of response of the optical-path transfer device of this example 4, signal light was made into continuation light, on the other hand, control light was irradiated as a square wave chopped-light line of a duty ratio 1:1 by the frequency of several Hz to 100kHz by the acoustooptics component, and the size of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude by which the optical-path change was carried out was compared. Consequently, when the amplitude on the strength did not change to 3kHz but a frequency was further raised on the basis of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude at the time of 1Hz, the amplitude on the strength was decreased gradually and reduced by half at the time of 12kHz. That is, it was checked in 333 microseconds that a perfect optical-path change is possible. This is the high-speed response of 3 or more times compared with the optical switch using the thermooptic effect which used the electric heater.

[0146]

In order to measure the endurance of the optical-path transfer device of this example 4, signal light was made into continuation light, on the other hand, control light was irradiated as a square wave chopped-light line of a duty ratio 1:1 by 1kHz of frequency numbers by the acoustooptics component, and the time amount of the signal luminous-intensity amplitude by which the optical-path change was carried out was compared. Consequently, even if 20,000 hours passed continuously, the signal luminous-intensity amplitude was not decreased.

[0147]

[Effect of the Invention]

As mentioned above, as explained to the detail, by this invention, without using a part for an electrical circuit or mechanical moving part, in the include angle and direction of an optical-path change without a polarization dependency with high endurance, there is little attenuation of the signal light which can be set up freely on the strength [optical], multiply-connected use is possible, and the optical-path transfer device and the optical-path change approach of a sufficiently practical speed of response can be offered.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

[Drawing 1] It is the outline block diagram of the optical-path transfer device of an example 1.

[Drawing 2] It is drawing shown how depending on which light in case a heat lens is not formed progresses.

[Drawing 3] It is drawing having shown how depending on which light when a heat lens is formed progresses.

[Drawing 4] It is the mimetic diagram having shown the principle of the optical-path change in an example 1.

[Drawing 5] It is the sectional view which illustrated the example of a configuration of a heat lens formation component.

[Drawing 6] It is the sectional view which illustrated the example of a configuration of a heat lens formation component.

[Drawing 7] It is drawing showing the relation of the slit and light beam which were used for optical intensity-distribution measurement of a signal light beam cross section.

[Drawing 8] It is drawing showing the optical intensity distribution of the beam cross section of signal light. [Drawing 9] It is drawing showing the optical intensity distribution of the beam cross section of signal light.

[Drawing 10] It is drawing showing the optical intensity distribution of the beam cross section of signal light.

[Drawing 11] It is the mimetic diagram having shown the principle of the optical-path change in an example 2.

[Drawing 12] It is a mimetic diagram showing a situation [/ near the focus of the Gaussian beam which it converged with the condenser lens etc.].

[Drawing 13] It is drawing showing the wave of the control light observed with the oscilloscope, and signal light.

[Drawing 14] It is drawing showing the wave of the control light observed with the oscilloscope, and signal

light.

[Drawing 15] It is drawing showing the relation of signal luminous intensity (amplitude) by which the optical-path change was carried out with the frequency which is intermittent in control light.
[Description of Notations]

1, 2, and 3 5 A heat lens formation component and 6 Beam waist (*****), 11, 12, and 13 The outgoing radiation signal light optical fiber after an optical-path change, and 21, 22 and 23 Control light light source, 30 A collimate lens, and 31, 32 and 33 A condenser lens and 40 The condenser lens of rectilinearpropagation outgoing radiation signal light, 41, 42, and 43 A light-receiving lens and 50 An incidence side heat lens, and 51, 52 and 53 Dichroic mirror, 60 An outgoing radiation side heat lens, and 61, 62 and 63 A mirror with a hole, and 71, 72 and 73 The outgoing radiation signal light condenser lens after an optical-path change, 91 A heat transfer layer membrane, 92 light-absorption layer membrane, and 93 A heat transfer layer membrane and 100 The optical fiber of incidence signal light, 101 The optical fiber of rectilinearpropagation outgoing radiation signal light, and 110 Incidence signal light and 111,112,113 Rectilinearpropagation signal light, 116 Leakage signal light and 117 Convergence rectilinear-propagation signal light and 121,122,123 Control light, 141,142,143 A wavelength selection transparency filter and 161 The hole of a mirror with a hole, 200 The outgoing radiation signal light of the usual aperture include angle, and 201 Outgoing radiation signal light which spreads in the shape of a ring, 211,212,213 The outgoing radiation signal light after an optical-path change, and 300 Wave front, 301 A focus (condensing point) and 500 A heat lens formation component and 501 Heat transfer layer membrane, 502 A heat transfer layer membrane and 503 The light absorption film and 504 The light absorption film and 505 Heat lens formative layer, 506 A light transmission layer and 507 A gradient index lens and 508 Signal light, 509 control light and 600 A heat lens formation component and 601 A heat transfer layer membrane and 602 Heat transfer layer membrane, 603 light absorption film and 604 The light absorption film and 605 The heat lens formative layer and 608 Signal light, 609 control light, and 610 A condenser lens and 700 An optical intensitydistribution measuring instrument and 1210 The wave of control light, and 2110 Wave of signal light.

[Translation done.]

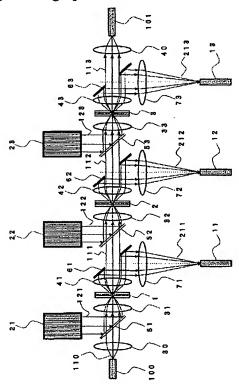
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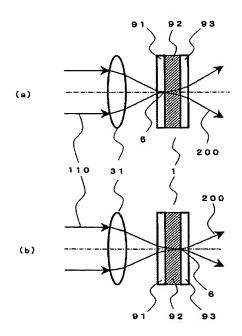
- 1. This document has been translated by computer. So the translation may not reflect the original precisely.
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- 3.In the drawings, any words are not translated.

DRAWINGS

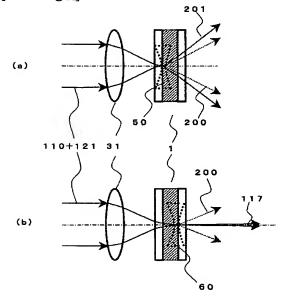
[Drawing 1]



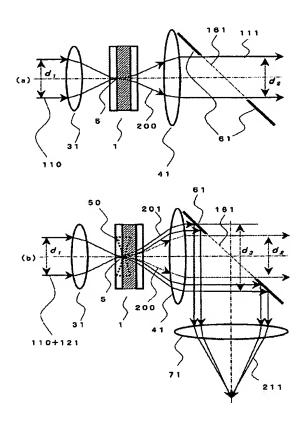
[Drawing 2]

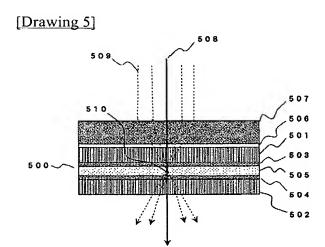


[Drawing 3]

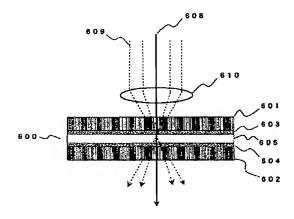


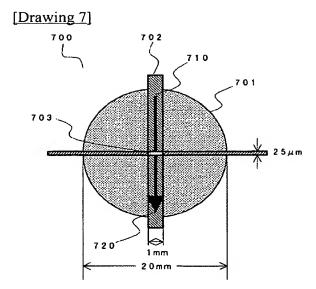
[Drawing 4]



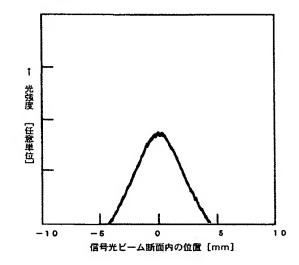




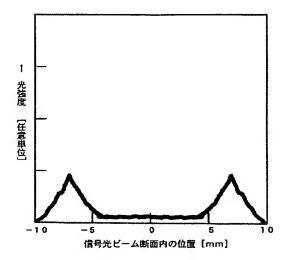




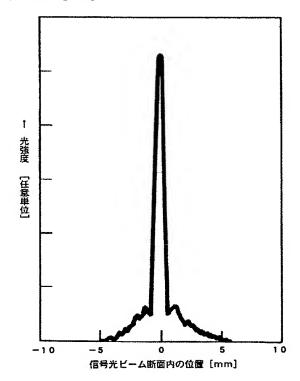
[Drawing 8]



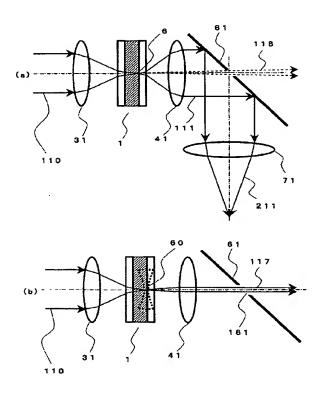
[Drawing 9]



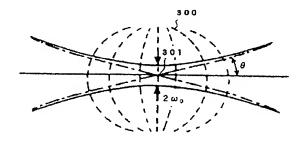
[Drawing 10]



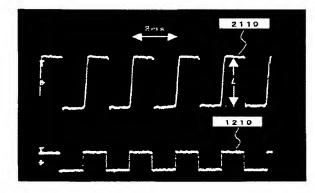
[Drawing 11]



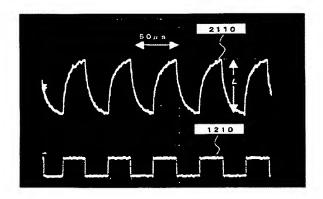
[Drawing 12]



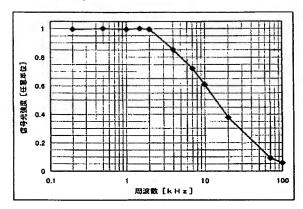
[Drawing 13]



[Drawing 14]



[Drawing 15]



[Translation done.]

OPTICAL PATH SWITCHING APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR SWITCHING OPTICAL PATH

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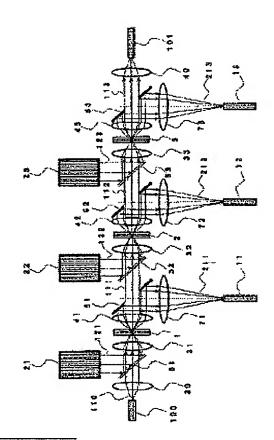
AU2003260960 (A1)

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Abstract of JP2004109892

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To provide an optical path switching apparatus and a method for switching optical path by which angles and directions for switching optical paths can be freely determined without depending on polarized waves, attenuation in the intensity of signal light is little, and multiple junctions can be used. SOLUTION: The method for switching optical paths includes the following steps in which: light absorbing layer films in thermal lens forming elements 1, 2, 3 are irradiated with converged light of controlling light 121, 122, 123 in the wavelength bands where the light absorbing films show absorption and of signal light 110, 111, 112, 113 in the wavelength bands where the films do not show absorption; when the films are not irradiated with the controlling light, the signal light passes through holes 61, 62, 63 in mirrors to straightly propagate; and when the films are irradiated with the controlling light, the light is reflected by the holed mirrors to change the optical paths.

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最終頁に続く

(54) 【発明の名称】光路切替装置および光路切替方法

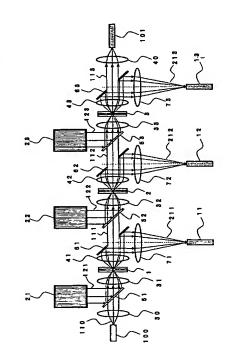
(57)【要約】 (修正有)

【課題】偏波依存性のない、光路切替の角度および方向 を自由に設定可能な、信号光の光強度減衰が少なく多重 連結使用が可能な光路切替装置および光路切替方法を提

【解決手段】熱レンズ形成素子1,2,3中の光吸収層 膜に、光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域の制御光121, 122, 123、および、光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長 帯域の信号光110,111,112,113を各々収 束させて照射し、制御光が照射されない場合は信号光が 鏡の穴61、62,63を通して直進させ、一方、制御 光が照射され場合は、穴付ミラーを用いて反射すること によって光路を変更させる光路切替方法。

【選択図】

図 1



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【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】

少なくとも制御光が焦点を結ぶように配置された光吸収層膜と、

少なくとも前記光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれる波長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長帯域から選ばれる波長の信号光とを各々収束させて照射する手段と、

前記光吸収層膜を含み、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用いることによって、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度で出射する状態と、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度よりも大きい開き角度で出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応させて実現させる熱レンズ形成素子と、

通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、受 光レンズによって前記通常の開き角度を変更させた後、通過させる穴を設けた鏡であって 、通常よりも大きい開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から拡がりながら出射する前記信号 光をそのまま、または、前記受光レンズによって前記通常よりも大きい開き角度を変更さ せた後、反射することによって光路を変更させる鏡と、

を備えることを特徴とする光路切替装置。

【請求項2】

少なくとも制御光が焦点を結ぶように配置された光吸収層膜と、

少なくとも前記光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれる波長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長帯域から選ばれる波長の信号光とを各々収束させて照射する手段と、

前記光吸収層膜を含み、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用いることによって、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が収束されたまま出射する状態と、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度で出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応させて実現させる熱レンズ形成素子と、

収束されたまま前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記収束された信号光が通過する穴を設けた鏡であって、通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、前記開き角度を変更させるために設けられた受光レンズを透過させた後、反射することによって光路を変更させる鏡と、

を備えることを特徴とする光路切替装置。

【請求項3】

少なくとも光吸収層膜を含む熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれる波長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長帯域から選ばれる波長の信号光とを各々収束させて照射し、少なくとも前記制御光が前記光吸収層膜内において焦点を結ぶように前記光吸収層膜の配置を調整し、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用いることによって、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態と、前記制の開き角度よりも大きい開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応させて実現させ、

制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は、通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、受光レンズによって前記通常の開き角度を変更させた後、前記信号光が通過する穴を設けた鏡の穴を通して直進させ、

一方、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は、通常よりも大きい開き角度で前 記熱レンズ形成素子から拡がりながら出射する前記信号光をそのまま、あるいは、受光レ

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ンズによって前記拡がりの開き角度を変更させた後、前記穴付ミラーの反射面を用いて反射することによって光路を変更させることを特徴とする光路切替方法。

【請求項4】

少なくとも光吸収層膜を含む熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれる波長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長帯域から選ばれる波長の信号光とを各々収束させて照射し、少なくとも前記制御光が前記光吸収層膜内において焦点を結ぶように前記光吸収層膜の配置を調整し、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用いることによって、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が収束されたまま前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態と、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応させて実現させ、

制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は、収束されたまま前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記収束された信号光を、信号光が通過する穴を設けた鏡の穴を通して直進させ、

一方、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は、通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光の光路をそのまま、または、受光レンズによって前記拡がりの開き角度を変更させた後、前記穴付ミラーの反射面を用いて反射することによって光路を変更させることを特徴とする光路切替方法。

【発明の詳細な説明】

[0001]

【発明の属する技術分野】

本発明は、光通信分野および光情報処理分野で用いられる光路切替装置および光路切替方法に関する。

[0002]

【従来の技術】

インターネットおよび会社内・家庭内イントラネットの普及にともなうネットワークトラフィックの爆発的増加に対応するため、電気信号を経由しない光路切替装置(光スイッチ)、すなわち、光一光直接スイッチが求められている。光ファイバー、光導波路、あるいは、空間を伝搬する光の進む道筋、すなわち、光路を切り替える装置・方法としては、例えば、光導波路内または光導波路間で光路を切り替える空間分割型、多重化された複数の波長の光を波長に応じた光路へ分割して切り替える波長分割多重型、一定時間毎に時分割多重化された光の光路を切り替える時分割多重型、空間を伝搬する光の光路を鏡やシャッターなどを用いて空間的に分割・合成するフリースペース型などの方式が知られている。これらの方式は、各々多重化することも複数を組み合わせて使用することもできる。

[0003]

空間分割型光スイッチには、方向性結合器を利用するもの、光分岐器で光信号のコピーを作り、ゲート素子により光をオン・オフするもの、交差または Y 分岐の交差部分で導波路の屈折率を変化させることで、導波路を伝搬してきた光を透過させたり反射させるものなどが提案されているが、まだ研究開発段階である。マッハツェンダー干渉計型光導波路スイッチの導波路の屈折率を変化させるために電気ヒーター加熱による熱光学効果を用いるものが実用化に近づいているといわれているが、応答速度が 1 ミリ秒程度と遅いだけでなく、光スイッチを動作させるために電気信号を用いなければならない、という欠点を有する。

[0004]

フリースペース型光スイッチには、マイクロ・エレクトロ・メカニカル・システム (Micro Electro Mechanical System; MEMSと略記される。)、励起子吸収・反射スイッチ (Exciton Absorption Reflection Switch; EARSスイッチと略記される)、多段ビームシフタ型光

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スイッチ、ホログラム型光スイッチ、液晶スイッチなどが検討されている。これらは、機械的可動部分がある、偏波依存性があるなどの課題があり、まだ充分実用段階にあるとはいえない。

[0005]

一方、光学素子に光を照射することで引き起こされる透過率変化や屈折率変化を利用し、 直接、光で光の強度や周波数を変調する、全光型光学素子や光制御方式の研究が盛んに行 われている。本発明者らは、全光型光素子等による新たな情報処理技術の開発を目指して 、有機色素凝集体をポリマーマトリックスに分散した有機ナノパーティクル光熱レンズ形 成素子(非特許文献1参照)を用いて、光制御方式の研究を行って来た。現在、制御光(633 nm) により信号光 (780 nm) の変調を行う方式で、制御光と信号光を同軸・ 同焦点入射させることを特徴とし、制御光の吸収により過渡的に形成される熱レンズによ り信号光が屈折されるという動作原理の素子を開発しており、約20ナノ秒の高速応答が 達成されている。光応答性組成物からなる光学素子に制御光を照射し、制御光とは異なる 波長帯域にある信号光の透過率および/または屈折率を可逆的に変化させることにより前 記光学素子を透過する前記信号光の強度変調および/または光束密度変調を行う光制御方 法であって、前記制御光および前記信号光を各々収束させて前記光学素子へ照射し、かつ 、前記制御光および前記信号光のそれぞれの焦点の近傍(ビームウエスト)の光子密度が 最も高い領域が前記光学素子中において互いに重なり合うように前記制御光および前記信 号光の光路を調整することを特徴とする光制御方法が開示されている(特許文献1から特 許文献7参照)。光応答性組成物からなる光学素子に、互いに波長の異なる制御光および 信号光を照射し、前記制御光の波長は前記光応答性組成物が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれ るものとし、前記光応答性組成物が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に発生 する温度上昇に起因する密度変化の分布に基づいた熱レンズを可逆的に形成させ、前記熱 レンズを透過する信号光の強度変調および/または光束密度変調を行う光制御方法が開示 されている(特許文献 8 参照)。そして、上記光学素子として例えば色素/樹脂膜や色素 溶液膜が用いられ、制御光のパワー2ないし25mWにおける制御光照射に対する信号光 の応答時間は、2マイクロ秒未満と記載されている(特許文献8参照)。

[0006]

ここで熱レンズ効果とは、光吸収の中心部分において光を吸収した分子などが光を熱に変換し、この熱が周囲に伝搬されることにより温度分布が生じ、その結果、光透過媒体の屈折率が光吸収中心から外部へ向けて球状に変化して光吸収中心の屈折率が低く外部へ向けて屈折率が高くなる分布を生じ、これが凹レンズのように機能するような光の屈折効果を示す。熱レンズ効果は分光分析の分野で古くから利用されており、現在では分子1個による光吸収をも検出するような超高感度分光分析も可能になっている(非特許文献 2 及び非特許文献 3 参照)。

[0007]

熱レンズ効果ないし熱による屈折率変化を用いて光路を偏向させる方式として、発熱抵抗体で媒体に熱を与え、媒体内に屈折率分布を生じさせ、光を偏向する方法が開示されている(特許文献 9 参照)。しかしながら、上述の手法は、発熱抵抗体で発熱させ、熱伝導で媒体を加熱することになるので、「熱の拡がり」という問題を本来的に有する。つまり、熱の拡がりにより、広い面積内で微細な熱勾配を与えることができず、所望の屈折率分布を得るのが困難である。更に、発熱抵抗体の微細加工は半導体集積回路で用いられているフォトリソグラフィ技術を採用しても、現実には一定の限界を有し、素子が大型化せざるを得ない。素子が大型化すれば、それにともない光学系も複雑かつ大型化する。また、発熱抵抗体で発熱させ、熱伝導で媒体を加熱することになるので、応答が遅く、屈折率変化の周波数を上げることができないという不具合を本質的な問題として有している。

[0008]

また、光応答組成物からなる光学素子と、該光学素子にくさび形の光強度分布で光を照射するための強度分布調整手段とから少なくとも構成され、制御光により前記光学素子中に屈折率分布を形成し、該屈折率分布により前記制御光とは異なる波長の信号光の偏向を行

うことを特徴とする光学素子を用いた偏向素子が開示されている(特許文献 1 0 参照)。 この方式は、光で光を制御する点では優れたものであるが、偏向角度が 3 0 度以内という 制約があり、光路切替方向を自由に設定することができないという問題がある。

[0009]

【非特許文献1】

平賀隆、田中教雄、早水紀久子、守谷哲郎著、色素会合体・凝集体の作成・構造評価・光物性、「電子技術総合研究所彙報」、通商産業省工業技術院電子技術総合研究所発行、第59巻、第2号、29-49頁(1994年)

【非特許文献2】

藤原祺多夫、不破敬一郎、小林孝嘉著、レーザー誘起熱レンズ効果とその比色法への応用、「化学」、化学同人発行、第36巻、第6号、432-438頁(1981年)

【非特許文献3】

北森武彦、澤田嗣郎著、光熱変換分光分析法、「ぶんせき」、日本分析化学会発行、1994年3月号、178-187頁

【特許文献1】

特開平8-286220号公報

【特許文献2】

特開平8-320535号公報

【特許文献3】

特開平8-320536号公報

【特許文献4】

特開平9-329816号公報

【特許文献5】

特開平10-90733号公報

【特許文献6】

特開平10-90734号公報

【特許文献7】

特開平10-148852号公報

【特許文献8】

特開平10-148853号公報

【特許文献9】

特開昭60-14221号公報

【特許文献10】

特開平11-194373号公報

[0010]

【発明が解決しようとする課題】

本発明は、電気回路や機械的可動部分を用いずに故障のない、耐久性の高い、偏波依存性のない、光路切替の角度および方向を自由に設定可能な、信号光の光強度減衰が少なく多重連結使用が可能な光路切替装置および光路切替方法を提供することを目的とする。

[0011]

【課題を解決するための手段】

上記の目的を達成するため、本発明の光路切替装置は、少なくとも制御光が焦点を結ぶように配置された光吸収層膜と、少なくとも前記光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない液長帯域から選ばれる液長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない液長帯域から選ばれる液長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない液長帯域から選ばれる液長の信号光とを各々収束させて照射する手段と、前記光吸収層膜を含み、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用いることによって、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度で拡がりながら出射する状態と、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度よりも大きい開き角度で出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応

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させて実現させる熱レンズ形成素子と、通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、受光レンズによって前記通常の開き角度を変更させた後、通過させる穴を設けた鏡であって、通常よりも大きい開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から拡がりながら出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、前記受光レンズによって前記通常よりも大きい開き角度を変更させた後、反射することによって光路を変更させる鏡と、を備えることを特徴とするものである。

[0012]

[0013]

上記の目的を達成するため、本発明の光路切替方法は、少なくとも光吸収層膜を含む熱レ ンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれる波長の 制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長帯域から選ばれる波長の信号光とを各々収束 させて照射し、少なくとも前記制御光が前記光吸収層膜内において焦点を結ぶように前記 光吸収層膜の配置を調整し、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺 領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用い ることによって、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は前記収束された信号 光が通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態と、制御光が照射されて熱 レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が通常の開き角度よりも大きい開き角度 で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応させて実 現させ、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は、通常の開き角度で前記熱レ ンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、受光レンズによって前記通常 の開き角度を変更させた後、前記信号光が通過する穴を設けた鏡の穴を通して直進させ、 - 方、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は、通常よりも大きい開き角度で前 記熱レンズ形成素子から拡がりながら出射する前記信号光をそのまま、または、受光レン ズによって前記拡がりの開き角度を変更させた後、前記穴付ミラーの反射面を用いて反射 することによって光路を変更させることを特徴とするものである。

[0014]

上記の目的を達成するため、本発明の他の光路切替方法は、また、少なくとも光吸収層膜を含む熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜に、前記光吸収層膜が吸収する波長帯域から選ばれる波長の制御光と、前記光吸収層膜が吸収しない波長帯域から選ばれる波長の信号光とを各々収束させて照射し、少なくとも前記制御光が前記光吸収層膜内において焦点を結ぶように前記光吸収層膜の配置を調整し、前記光吸収層膜が前記制御光を吸収した領域およびその周辺領域に起こる温度上昇に起因して可逆的に生ずる屈折率の分布に基づいた熱レンズを用いることによって、制御光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は前記収束された信号光が収束されたまま前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する状態と、制御光が照射の有無に対応させて実現させ、制御光の成素子から出射する状態とを、前記制御光の照射の有無に対応させて実現させ、制御

光が照射されて熱レンズが形成される場合は、収束されたまま前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記収束された信号光を、信号光が通過する穴を設けた鏡の穴を通して直進させ、一方、制御光が照射されず熱レンズが形成されない場合は、通常の開き角度で前記熱レンズ形成素子から出射する前記信号光の光路をそのまま、または、受光レンズによって前記拡がりの開き角度を変更させた後、前記穴付ミラーの反射面を用いて反射することによって光路を変更させることを特徴とするものである。

[0015]

【発明の実施の形態】

[熱レンズ形成素子]

本発明において、熱レンズ形成素子としては例えば積層膜型構造を有するものを好適に用いることができ、その積層膜の構成としては例えば以下のような組み合わせを挙げることができる。

[0016]

(1) 光吸収層膜単独。ただし、光吸収層膜は、文字通り「光吸収膜」単独の単層膜、あるいは、「光吸収膜/熱レンズ形成層」という2層構造、または、「光吸収膜/熱レンズ形成層/光吸収膜」という3層構造の積層型薄膜のいずれであっても良い。なお、以下の(2)から(10)の「光吸収層膜」も上記同様の構造を含むものとする。

[0017]

- (2) 光吸収層膜/保温層膜
- ·(3)保温層膜/光吸収層膜/保温層膜
 - (4) 光吸収層膜/伝熱層膜
 - (5) 伝熱層膜/光吸収層膜/伝熱層膜
 - (6) 光吸収層膜/保温層膜/伝熱層膜
 - (7) 伝熱層膜/光吸収層膜/保温層膜
 - (8) 伝熱層膜/光吸収層膜/保温層膜/伝熱層膜
 - (9) 伝熱層膜/保温層膜/光吸収層膜/保温層膜
 - (10) 伝熱層膜/保温層膜/光吸収層膜/保温層膜/伝熱層膜
- (11)屈折率分布型レンズ/(光透過層/)上記(1)ないし(10)の熱レンズ形成素子
- (12) 屈折率分布型レンズ/(光透過層/)上記(1)ないし(10)の熱レンズ形成素子/(光透過層/)屈折率分布型レンズ

なお、上記「(光透過層/)」とは、必要に応じて光透過層を設けることを意味する。更に、必要に応じて光の入射面および出射面に反射防止膜(ARコート膜)を設けても良い

[0018]

熱レンズ形成素子の構成の一例を例示した断面図を図5に示す。図5に例示するように、熱レンズ形成素子500は、制御光509および信号光508の入射側から、例えば、屈折率分布型レンズ507/光透過層506/伝熱層膜501/光吸収層膜503/熱レンズ形成層505/光吸収層膜504/伝熱層膜502の順に積層されてなる。なお、図5に示す制御光509の光線は模式的なものであり、各層膜間における屈折を省略している

[0019]

光吸収層膜、熱レンズ形成層、保温層膜、伝熱層膜、光透過層、および屈折率分布型レンズの材料、作成方法、各々の膜厚などについて、以下に、順を追って説明する。

[0020]

なお、本発明で用いられる光吸収層膜、熱レンズ形成層、保温層膜、伝熱層膜、光透過層、および屈折率分布型レンズの材料は、その機能に支障をきたさない範囲において、加工性を向上させたり、光学素子としての安定性・耐久性を向上させるため、添加物として公知の酸化防止剤、紫外線吸収剤、一重項酸素クエンチャー、分散助剤などを含有しても良い。

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[0021]

[光吸収層膜の材料]

本発明で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜に用いられる光吸収性の材料としては、公知の種々のものを使用することができる。

[0022]

本発明で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜に用いられる光吸収性材料の例を具 体的に挙げるならば、例えば、GaAs、GaAsP、GaAlAs、InP、InSb 、InAs、PbTe、InGaAsP、ZnSeなどの化合物半導体の単結晶、前記化 合物半導体の微粒子をマトリックス材料中へ分散したもの、異種金属イオンをドープした 金属ハロゲン化物(例えば、臭化カリウム、塩化ナトリウムなど)の単結晶、前記金属ハ ロゲン化物(例えば、臭化銅、塩化銅、塩化コバルトなど)の微粒子をマトリックス材料 中へ分散したもの、銅などの異種金属イオンをドープしたCdS、CdSe、CdSeS 、СdSeTeなどのカドミウムカルコゲナイドの単結晶、前記カドミウムカルコゲナイ ドの微粒子をマトリックス材料中に分散したもの、シリコン、ゲルマニウム、セレン、テ ルルなどの半導体単結晶薄膜、多結晶薄膜ないし多孔質薄膜、シリコン、ゲルマニウム、 セレン、テルルなどの半導体微粒子をマトリックス材料中へ分散したもの、ルビー、アレ キサンドライト、ガーネット、Nd:YAG、サファイア、Ti:サファイア、Nd:Y LFなど、金属イオンをドープした宝石に相当する単結晶(いわゆるレーザー結晶)、金 属イオン(例えば、鉄イオン)をドープしたニオブ酸リチウム(LiNbOa)、LiB 3 O 5 、Li T a O 3 、K T i O P O 4 、K H 2 P O 4 、K N b O 3 、B a B 2 O 2 など の強誘電性結晶、金属イオン(例えば、ネオジウムイオン、エルビウムイオンなど)をド ープした石英ガラス、ソーダガラス、ホウケイ酸ガラス、その他のガラスなどのほか、マ トリックス材料中に色素を溶解または分散したもの、および、非晶質の色素凝集体を好適 に使用することができる。

[0023]

これらの中でも、マトリックス材料中に色素を溶解または分散したものは、マトリックス 材料および色素の選択範囲が広く、かつ熱レンズ形成素子への加工も容易であるため、特 に好適に用いることができる。

[0024]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いることができる色素の具体例としては、例えば、ローダミンB、ローダミン6G、エオシン、フロキシンBなどのキサンテン系色素、アクリジンオレンジ、アクリジンレッドなどのアクリジン系色素、エチルレッド、メチルレッドなどのアゾ色素、ポルフィリン系色素、フタロシアニン系色素、3,3'ージエチルチアカルボシアニンヨージド、3,3'ージエチルオキサジカルボシアニンヨージドなどのシアニン色素、エチル・バイオレット、ビクトリア・ブルーRなどのトリアリールメタン系色素、ナフトキノン系色素、アントラキノン系色素、ナフタレンテトラカルボン酸ジイミド系色素、ペリレンテトラカルボン酸ジイミド系色素などを好適に使用することができる。

[0025]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法では、これらの色素を単独で、または、2種以 40上を混合して使用することができる。

[0026]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いることのできるマトリックス材料は、

- (1) 本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いられる光の波長領域で透過率が高いこと、
- (2) 本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いられる色素または種々の微粒子を 安定性良溶解または分散できること、

という条件を満足するものであれば任意のものを使用することができる。

[0027]

無機系のマトリックス材料としては、例えば金属ハロゲン化物の単結晶、金属酸化物の単

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結晶、金属カルコゲナイドの単結晶、石英ガラス、ソーダガラス、ホウケイ酸ガラスなどの他、いわゆるゾルゲル法で作成された低融点ガラス材料などを使用することができる。 【0028】

また、有機系のマトリックス材料としては、例えば種々の有機高分子材料を使用すること ができる。その具体例としては、ポリスチレン、ポリ(αーメチルスチレン)、ポリイン デン、ポリ(4-メチル-1-ペンテン)、ポリビニルピリジン、ポリビニルホルマール 、ポリビニルアセタール、ポリビニルブチラール、ポリ酢酸ビニル、ポリビニルアルコー ル、ポリ塩化ビニル、ポリ塩化ビニリデン、ポリビニルメチルエーテル、ポリビニルエチ ルエーテル、ポリビニルベンジルエーテル、ポリビニルメチルケトン、ポリ(Nービニル カルバゾール)、ポリ(N-ビニルピロリドン)、ポリアクリル酸メチル、ポリアクリル 酸エチル、ポリアクリル酸、ポリアクリロニトリル、ポリメタクリル酸メチル、ポリメタ クリル酸エチル、ポリメタクリル酸ブチル、ポリメタクリル酸ベンジル、ポリメタクリル 酸シクロヘキシル、ポリメタクリル酸、ポリメタクリル酸アミド、ポリメタクリロニトリ ル、ポリアセトアルデヒド、ポリクロラール、ポリエチレンオキシド、ポリプロピレンオ キシド、ポリエチレンテレフタレート、ポリブチレンテレフタレート、ポリカーボネート 類(ビスフェノール類+炭酸)、ポリ(ジエチレングリコール・ビスアリルカーボネイト) 類、6-ナイロン、6,6-ナイロン、12-ナイロン、6,12-ナイロン、ポリア スパラギン酸エチル、ポリグルタミン酸エチル、ポリリジン、ポリプロリン、ポリ(v-ベンジルーL-グルタメート)、メチルセルロース、エチルセルロース、ベンジルセルロ ース、ヒドロキシエチルセルロース、ヒドロキシプロピルセルロース、アセチルセルロー ス、セルローストリアセテート、セルローストリブチレート、アルキド樹脂(無水フタル 酸 + グリセリン)、脂肪酸変性アルキド樹脂 (脂肪酸 + 無水フタル酸 + グリセリン)、不 飽和ポリエステル樹脂(無水マレイン酸+無水フタル酸+プロピレングリコール)、エポ キシ樹脂(ビスフェノール類+エピクロルヒドリン)、ポリウレタン樹脂、フェノール樹 脂、尿素樹脂、メラミン樹脂、キシレン樹脂、トルエン樹脂、グアナミン樹脂などの樹脂 、ポリ(フェニルメチルシラン) ィなどの有機ポリシラン、有機ポリゲルマンおよびこれら の共重合・共重縮合体が挙げられる。また、二硫化炭素、四フッ化炭素、エチルベンゼン 、パーフルオロベンゼン、パーフルオロシクロヘキサンまたはトリメチルクロロシラン等 、通常では重合性のない化合物をプラズマ重合して得た高分子化合物などを使用すること ができる。更に、これらの有機高分子化合物に色素の残基をモノマー単位の側鎖として、 もしくは架橋基として、共重合モノマー単位として、または重合開始末端として結合させ たものをマトリックス材料として使用することもできる。更に、前記の色素残基とマトリ ックス材料が化学結合を形成していても良い。

[0029]

これらのマトリックス材料中へ色素を溶解または分散させるには公知の方法を用いることができる。例えば、色素とマトリックス材料を共通の溶媒中へ溶解して混合した後、溶媒を蒸発させて除去する方法、ゾルゲル法で製造する無機系マトリックス材料の原料溶液へ色素を溶解または分散させてからマトリックス材料を形成する方法、有機高分子系マトリックス材料を形成する方法、色素とされる方法、色素とされる方法、色素とないし重縮合させてマトリックス材料を形成する方法、色素と有機高分子系マトリックス材料を共通の溶媒中に溶解した溶液を、色素および熱可塑性の有機高分子系マトリックス材料の両方が不溶の溶剤中へ商下し、生じた沈殿を濾別し乾燥してから加熱・溶融加工する方法などを好適に用いることができる。色素とマトリックス材料の組み合わせおよび加工方法を工夫することで、色素分子を凝集させ、「H会合体」トリックス材料中の色素分子をこのような凝集状態もしくは会合状態を形成する条件で使用しても良い。

[0030]

また、これらのマトリックス材料中へ前記の種々の微粒子を分散させるには公知の方法を 用いることができる。例えば、前記微粒子をマトリックス材料の溶液、または、マトリッ クス材料の前駆体の溶液に分散した後、溶媒を除去する方法、有機高分子系マトリックス 材料のモノマー中へ、必要に応じて溶媒を用いて、前記微粒子を分散させてから該モノマーを重合ないし重縮合させてマトリックス材料を形成する方法、微粒子の前駆体として、 例えば過塩素酸カドミウムや塩化金などの金属塩を有機高分子系マトリックス材料中へ溶 解または分散した後、硫化水素ガスで処理して硫化カドミウムの微粒子を、または、熱処 理することで金の微粒子を、それぞれマトリックス材料中に析出させる方法、化学的気相 成長法、スパッタリング法などを好適に用いることができる。

[0031]

色素を単独で、光散乱の少ない非晶質状態(アモルファス)の薄膜として存在させることができる場合は、マトリックス材料を用いずに、非晶質色素膜を光吸収層膜として用いることもできる。

[0032]

また、色素を単独で、光散乱を起こさない微結晶凝集体として存在させることができる場合は、マトリックス材料を用いずに、色素の微結晶凝集体を光吸収層膜として用いることもできる。本発明で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子におけるように、光吸収層膜としての色素微結晶凝集体が、熱レンズ形成層(樹脂など)、伝熱層膜(ガラスなど)および/または保温層膜(樹脂など)と積層されて存在する場合、前記色素微小結晶の粒子径が前記信号光の波長と制御光の波長を比べて短い方の波長の1/5を超えない大きさであれば、実質的に光散乱を起こさない。

[0033]

[光吸収層膜の材料、信号光の波長帯域、および制御光の波長帯域の組み合わせ] 本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で使用される光吸収層膜の材料、信号光の波長 帯域、および制御光の波長帯域は、これらの組み合わせとして、使用目的に応じて適切な 組み合わせを選定し用いることができる。

[0034]

具体的な設定手順としては、例えば、まず、使用目的に応じて信号光の波長ないし波長帯域を決定し、これを制御するのに最適な光吸収層膜の材料と制御光の波長の組み合わせを選定すれば良い。または、使用目的に応じて信号光と制御光の波長の組み合わせを決定してから、この組み合わせに適した光吸収層膜の材料を選定すれば良い。

[0035]

[光吸収層膜の材料の組成、光吸収層膜中の光吸収層膜の膜厚、および熱レンズ形成層の 膜原]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子において、光吸収層膜は、「光吸収膜」単独の単層膜、あるいは、「光吸収膜/熱レンズ形成層」という2層構造、または、「光吸収膜/熱レンズ形成層/光吸収膜」という3層構造の積層型薄膜のいずれであっても良く、光吸収層膜全体の厚さは、収束された前記制御光の共焦点距離の2倍を超えないことが好ましい。更に、一層高速な応答速度を目指す場合は、前記積層型薄膜からなる光吸収層膜の厚さは、収束された前記制御光の共焦点距離の1倍を超えないことが好ましい。

[0036]

このような条件の中で、本発明で用いられる光吸収層膜の材料の組成および光吸収層膜中の光吸収膜(1または2枚)の膜厚については、これらの組み合わせとして、光吸収層膜を透過する制御光および信号光の透過率を基準にして設定することができる。例えば、まず、光吸収層膜の材料の組成の内、少なくとも制御光あるいは信号光を吸収する成分の濃度を決定し、次いで、熱レンズ形成素子を透過する制御光および信号光の透過率が特定の値になるよう光吸収層膜中の光吸収膜(1または2枚)の膜厚を設定することができる。または、まず、例えば装置設計上の必要に応じて、光吸収層膜中の光吸収膜(1または2枚)の膜厚を特定の値に設定した後、熱レンズ形成素子を透過する制御光および信号光の透過率が特定の値になるよう光吸収層膜の材料の組成を調整することができる。

[0037]

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本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子から、できる限り低い光パワーで充分な大きさおよび高速度の熱レンズ効果を引き出すために最適な、光吸収層膜を透過する制御光および信号光の透過率の値は、それぞれ、次に示す通りである

[0038]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子においては、熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜を伝播する制御光の透過率が90%ないし0%になるよう光吸収層膜中の光吸収成分の濃度および存在状態の制御、光吸収層膜中の光吸収膜(1または2枚)の膜厚設定を行うことが推奨される。

[0039]

一方、制御光を照射しない状態において、熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収層膜を伝播する信号光の透過率が下限として10%以上、また、上限としては100%に限りなく近づくよう光吸収層膜中の光吸収成分の濃度および存在状態の制御、光吸収層膜中の光吸収膜(1または2枚)の膜厚設定を行うことが推奨される。

[0040]

光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層膜厚の下限は、以下に記載するように、熱レンズ形成層の材料に応じて選定される。

[0041]

[光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層の材料および熱レンズ形成層の膜厚]

単層の光吸収膜そのものが、熱レンズ形成層として作用しても良いが、光吸収と熱レンズ 形成の機能を別々の材料に分担させて、各々選択された最適の材料を積層して使用するこ とが好ましい。

[0042]

光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層の材料としては液体、液晶、および、固体の材料を用いることができる。特に、熱レンズ形成層が、非晶質の有機化合物、有機化合物液体、および液晶からなる群から選ばれる有機化合物からなると好適である。なお、熱レンズ形成層の材質が液晶および液体の場合、例えば、光吸収膜および/または伝熱層膜を自己形態保持性の材質で作成し、熱レンズ形成層の厚さに相当する空乏を設け、そこへ流動状態の熱レンズ形成層材料を注入することで、熱レンズ形成層を作成することができる。一方、熱レンズ形成層の材質が固体の場合は、熱レンズ形成層の片面または両面に光吸収膜を積層させて作成すれば良い。

[0043]

熱レンズ形成層の材質は単一でなくとも良く、例えば、複数種類の固体の積層膜であって も良く、また、固体と液体を積層させたものであっても良い。

[0044]

熱レンズ形成層の厚さは、用いる材料の種類にもよるが、数ナノメートルから数百 μ m の 範囲の厚さであれば良く、数十ナノメートルから数十 μ m の範囲であれば特に好適である

[0045]

前述のように、熱レンズ形成層と1または2枚の光吸収膜を積層してなる光吸収層膜の合計の厚さは、収束された前記制御光の共焦点距離の2倍を超えないことが好ましい。

[0046]

光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層の材料としては液体、液晶、および、固体の材料を用いる ことができるが、いずれの場合も屈折率の温度依存性が大きい材料が好ましい。

[0047]

代表的な有機化合物液体および水の屈折率温度依存性の物性値は文献 [D. Solimini: J. Appl. Phys., vol. 37, 3314 (1966)] に記載されている。波長633nmの光に対する屈折率の温度変化 [単位:1/K] は、水 (0.8×10 $^{-4}$) よりもメタノール (3.9×10 $^{-4}$) などのアルコールが大きく、更に、シクロペンタン (5.7×10 $^{-4}$)、ベンゼン (6.4×10 $^{-4}$)、クロロホルム (

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5.8×10⁻⁴)、ベンゼン(6.4×10⁻⁴)、二硫化炭素(7.7×10⁻⁴)などの非水素結合性有機溶剤が大きい。

[0048]

光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層の材料として液晶を用いる場合、液晶としては、公知の任 意のものを使用することができる。具体的には、種々のコレステロール誘導体、4′-n ープトキシベンジリデン-4-シアノアニリン、4'-n-ヘキシルベンジリデン-4-シアノアニリンなどの 4 ' ーアルコキシベンジリデンー 4 ーシアノアニリン類、 4 ' ーエ トキシベンジリデンー4-n-ブチルアニリン、4'-メトキシベンジリデンアミノアゾ ベンゼン、4-(4'-メトキシベンジリデン)アミノビフェニル、4-(4'-メトキ シベンジリデン) アミノスチルベンなどの 4 ′ - アルコキシベンジリデンアニリン類、 4 ' -シアノベンジリデン- 4 - n -ブチトキシアニリン、 4 ' -シアノベンジリデン- 4 - n - ヘキシルオキシアニリンなどの 4 ' - シアノベンジリデン - 4 - アルコキシアニリ ン類、 4 'ー n ーブトキシカルボニルオキシベンジリデンー 4 ーメトキシアニリン、 p ー カルボキシフェニル・n-アミルカーボネイト、n-ヘプチル・4-(4'-エトキシフ ェノキシカルボニル)フェニルカーボネイトなどの炭酸エステル類、4-n-ブチル安息 香酸・4'ーエトキシフェニル、4-n-ブチル安息香酸・4'ーオクチルオキシフェニ ル、4-n-ペンチル安息香酸・4'-ヘキシルオキシフェニルなどの4-アルキル安息 香酸・4′ーアルコキシフェニルエステル類、4,4′ージーnーアミルオキシアゾキシ ベンゼン、 4′, 4′ージーnーノニルオキシアゾキシベンゼンなどのアゾキシベンゼン誘 導体、4-シアノー4′-n-オクチルビフェニル、4-シアノー4′-n-ドデシルビ フェニルなどの4-シアノー4′ーアルキルビフェニル類などの液晶、および(2S,3 S) - 3 - メチル- 2 - クロロペンタノイック酸・4′, 4″-オクチルオキシビフェニ ル、4'- (2-メチルブチル) ビフェニル-4-カルボン酸・4-ヘキシルオキシフェ ニル、4'-オクチルビフェニル-4-カルボン酸・4-(2-メチルブチル)フェニル などの強誘電性液晶を使用することができる。

[0049]

光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層の材料として固体の材料を用いる場合は、光散乱が小さく屈折率の温度依存性の大きな、非晶質の有機化合物が特に好適である。具体的には、前記マトリックス材料と同様に、種々の有機高分子材料の中から光学用樹脂として公知のものを選定して使用することができる。文献[技術情報協会編、「最新光学用樹脂の開発、特性と高精度部品の設計、成形技術」、技術情報協会(1993)、 P.35]に記載されている光学用樹脂の屈折率の温度変化[単位:1/K]は、例えば、ポリ(メタクリル酸メチル)1.2×10 $^{-4}$ 、ポリカーボネート1.4×10 $^{-4}$ 、ポリスチレン1.5×10 $^{-4}$ である。これらの樹脂を光吸収層膜中の熱レンズ形成層の材料として好適に使用することができる。

[0050]

前記有機溶剤の屈折率温度依存性は前記光学用樹脂の場合よりも大きいというメリットがある反面、制御光照射による温度上昇が有機溶剤の沸点に到達すると沸騰してしまうという問題がある(高沸点の溶剤を用いる場合は問題ない)。これに対して、揮発性不純物を徹底的に除去した光学用樹脂は、例えばポリカーボネートの場合、制御光照射による温度上昇が250℃を超えるような過酷な条件においても使用可能である。

[0051]

[保温層膜]

保温層膜として気体を用いる場合は、空気の他、窒素、ヘリウム、ネオン、アルゴンなど の不活性ガスを好適に用いることができる。

[0052]

保温層膜として液体を用いる場合は、熱伝導率が光吸収層膜と同等か光吸収層膜よりも小さい材質であって、かつ、制御光および信号光を透過し、光吸収層膜の材質を溶解または腐食しないものであれば、任意の液体を用いることができる。例えば、光吸収層膜がシアニン色素を含有したポリメタクリル酸メチルからなる場合、流動性パラフィンを用いるこ

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とができる。

[0053]

保温層膜として固体を用いる場合は、熱伝導率が光吸収層膜(光吸収膜および熱レンズ形成層)と同等か光吸収層膜よりも小さい材質であって、かつ、制御光および信号光を透過し、光吸収層膜や伝熱層膜の材質と反応しないものであれば、任意の固体を用いることができる。例えば、光吸収膜がシアニン色素を含有したポリメタクリル酸メチルからなる場合、色素を含まないポリメタクリル酸メチル [300 Kにおける熱伝導率 0.15 W m ⁻¹ K ⁻¹] を保温層膜として用いることができる。

[0054]

[伝熱層膜の材料]

伝熱層膜としては、熱伝導率が光吸収層膜よりも大きい材質が好ましく、制御光および信号光を透過し、光吸収層膜や保温層膜の材質と反応しないものであれば、任意のものを用いることができる。熱伝導率が高く、かつ、可視光線の波長帯域における光吸収が小さい材質として、例えば、ダイアモンド $\begin{bmatrix}300 \text{ K} & \text{K} & \text{$

[0055]

[光透過層の材料]

本発明で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子は、前記制御光の収束手段としての屈折率分布型レンズが、光透過層を介して前記制御光の入射側に積層されて設けられていても良いが、光透過層の材質としては、固体の保温層膜および/または伝熱層膜の材質と同様のものを使用することができる。光透過層は、文字通り、前記制御光および信号光を効率良く透過させるだけでなく、屈折率分布型レンズを熱レンズ形成素子構成要素として接着するためのものである。いわゆる紫外線硬化型樹脂や電子線硬化型樹脂の内、前記制御光および信号光の波長帯域の光透過率の高いものを特に好適に用いることができる。

[0056]

[熱レンズ形成素子の作成方法]

本発明で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子の作成方法は、熱レンズ形成素子の構成および使用する材料の種類に応じて任意に選定され、公知の方法を用いることができる。

[0057]

例えば、熱レンズ形成素子中の光吸収膜に用いられる光吸収性の材料が、前述のような単結晶の場合、単結晶の切削・研磨加工によって、光吸収膜を作成することができる。

[0058]

例えば、色素を含有したマトリックス材料からなる光吸収膜、光学用樹脂からなる熱レンズ形成層、および光学ガラスを伝熱層膜として組み合わせて用いた「伝熱層膜/光吸収膜/熱レンズ形成層/光吸収膜/伝熱層膜」という構成の熱レンズ形成素子を作成する場合、以下に列挙するような方法によって、まず、伝熱層膜上に光吸収膜を作成することができる。

[0059]

色素およびマトリックス材料を溶解した溶液を、伝熱層膜として用いられるガラス板上に塗布法、ブレードコート法、ロールコート法、スピンコート法、ディッピング法、スプレー法などの塗工法で塗工するか、あるいは、平版、凸版、凹版、孔版、スクリーン、転写などの印刷法で印刷して光吸収膜を形成する方法を用いても良い。この場合、光吸収膜の形成にゾルゲル法による無機系マトリックス材料作成方法を利用することもできる。

[0060]

電着法、電解重合法、ミセル電解法(特開昭63-243298号公報)などの電気化学的成膜手法を用いることができる。

[0061]

更に、水の上に形成させた単分子膜を移し取るラングミア・プロジェット法を用いること

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ができる。

[0062]

原料モノマーの重合ないし重縮合反応を利用する方法として、例えば、モノマーが液体の場合、キャスティング法、リアクション・インジェクション・モールド法、プラズマ重合法、および、光重合法などが挙げられる。

[0063]

昇華転写法、蒸着法、真空蒸着法、イオンビーム法、スパッタリング法、プラズマ重合法、CVD法、有機分子線蒸着法、などの方法を用いることもできる。

2 成分以上の有機系光学材料を溶液または分散液状態で各成分毎に設けた噴霧ノズルから 高真空容器内に噴霧して基板上に堆積させ、加熱処理することを特徴とする複合型光学薄膜の製造方法(特許公報第 2 5 9 9 5 6 9 号)を利用することもできる。

[0064]

以上のような固体の光吸収膜の作成方法は、例えば、固体の有機高分子材料からなる保温 層膜を作成する場合にも、好適に使用することができる。

[0065]

次いで、熱可塑性の光学用樹脂を用いて熱レンズ形成層を作成する場合、真空ホットプレス法(特開平4-99609号公報)を用いて「伝熱層膜/光吸収膜/熱レンズ形成層/光吸収膜/伝熱層膜」という構成の熱レンズ形成素子を作成することができる。すなわち、熱可塑性光学用樹脂の粉末またはシートを、上記の方法で表面に光吸収膜を形成した2枚の伝熱層膜(ガラス板)で挟み、高真空下、加熱・プレスすることによって、上記構成の積層型薄膜素子を作成することができる。

[0066]

[屈折率分布型レンズの材料と作成方法]

本発明で用いられる熱レンズ形成素子は、前記制御光の収束手段としての屈折率分布型レンズが、光透過層を介して前記制御光の入射側に積層されて設けられていても良いが、この屈折率分布型レンズの材料と作成方法としては、公知の、任意のものを使用することができる。

[0067]

例えば、モノマーの浸透・拡散現象を利用して、屈折率分布型の屈折率分布型レンズを有機高分子系材質で作成することができる [M.Oikawa,K.Iga,T.Sanada:Jpn.J.Appl.Phys,20(1),L51-L54(1981)]。 すなわち、モノマー交換技術によって、屈折率分布レンズを平坦な基板上にモノリシックに作ることができ、例えば、低屈折率プラスチックとしてのメタクリル酸メチル(<math>n=1.494)を、3.6 $mm\phi$ の円形ディスクのマスクのまわりから、高屈折率をもつポリイソフタル酸ジアクリル(n=1.570)の平坦なプラスチック基板中へ拡散させる。 【0068】

また、無機イオンの拡散現象を利用し、屈折率分布型の屈折率分布型レンズを無機ガラス系材質で作成することができる [M.Oikawa,K.Iga:Appl.Opt., 21(6), 1052-1056(1982)]。すなわち、ガラス基板にマスクを付けてからフォトリソグラフィの手法により直径百 μ m前後の円形窓を設け、溶融塩に浸けてイオン交換により屈折率分布を形成させるに当たり、数時間に渡って電界を印加してイオン交換を促進させることによって、例えば、直径0.9mm、焦点距離2mm、開口数NA=0.23のレンズを形成させることができる。

[0069]

[ビームウエスト直径の計算]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法において熱レンズ効果を有効に利用するためには、焦点(集光点)近傍の光子密度が最も高い領域、すなわち「ビームウエスト」における前記信号光のビーム断面積が、ビームウエストにおける前記制御光のビーム断面積を超えないように前記信号光および前記制御光のビーム断面の形状および大きさをそれぞれ設定することが好ましい。

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[0070]

以下、進行方向ビーム断面の電場の振幅分布、すなわち光束のエネルギー分布がガウス分布となっているガウスビームの場合について述べる。なお、以下の説明では、ビーム収束手段として集光レンズ(屈折率分布型レンズ)を用いる場合について説明するが、収束手段が凹面鏡や屈折率分散型レンズであっても同様である。

[0071]

ガウスビームを、図1などの集光レンズ31などで、開き角2 θ で収束させたときの焦点301近傍における光線束および波面300の様子を図12に示す。ここで、波長 λ のガウスビームの直径2 ω が最小になる位置を「ビームウエスト」という。以下、ビームウエスト直径を2 ω 0 で表すものとする。光の回折作用のため、2 ω 0 はゼロにはならず、有限の値をもつ。なお、ビーム半径 ω 8 ω 0 の定義は、ガウスビームのビーム中心部分のエネルギーを基準として、エネルギーが1 χ 6 (e は自然対数の底)になる位置をビーム中心から測ったときの距離であり、ビーム直径は2 ω 0 で表される。いうまでもなく、ビームウエストの中心において、光子密度は最も高い。

[0072]

ガウスビームの場合、ビームウエストから充分に遠方でのビーム拡がり角 θ は波長 λ およびビームウエスト径 ω ₀ と、次の式 $\{1\}$ で関係付けられる。

[0073]

【数1】

 $\pi \cdot \theta \cdot \omega_0 = \lambda \cdots [1]$ ここで、 π は円周率である。

[0074]

「ビームウエストから充分に遠方」という条件を満たす場合に限りこの式を用いて、集光レンズに入射するビーム半径ω、集光レンズの開口数および焦点距離から、集光レンズで集光されたビームウエスト径ω。 を計算することができる。

[0075]

更に一般的に、有効開口半径 a および開口数 N A の集光レンズで、ビーム半径 ω の平行ガウスビーム(波長 λ)を収束させた場合のビームウエスト直径 2 ω $_0$ は、次の式〔2〕で表すことができる。

[0076]

【数2】

 $2 \omega_0 = k \cdot \lambda / NA \cdots (2)$

[0077]

ここで、係数 k は代数的に解くことができないため、レンズ結像面での光強度分布についての数値解析計算を行うことによって決定することができる。

[0078]

集光レンズに入射するビーム半径ωと集光レンズの有効開口半径 a の比率を変えて、数値解析計算を行うと、式〔2〕の係数 k の値は以下のように求まる。

[0079]

【数3】

 $a/\omega = 1$ のとき k = 0.92 $a/\omega = 2$ のとき k = 1.3

 $a/\omega = 3$ のとき k = 1.9

 $a/\omega = 4$ のとき k = 3

[0080]

すなわち、集光レンズの有効開口半径 a よりもビーム半径 ω が小さければ小さい程、ビームウエスト径 ω ο は大きくなる。

[0081]

例えば、集光レンズとして開口数 0. 25、有効開口半径約 5 m m のレンズを用い、波長 7 8 0 n m の信号光を収束したとき、集光レンズに入射するビーム半径 ω が 5 m m であれ

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ば a / ω は約 1 で、ビームウエストの半径 ω $_0$ は 1 . 4 μ m、 ω が 1 . 2 5 mm であれば a / ω は約 4 で ω $_0$ は 4 . 7 μ m と計算される。同様にして波長 6 3 3 n mの制御光を収束したとき、ビーム半径 ω が 5 mm であれば a / ω は約 1 で、ビームウエストの半径 ω $_0$ は 1 . 2 μ m、 ω が 1 . 2 5 mm であれば a / ω は約 4 で ω $_0$ は 3 . 8 μ m と計算される。

[0082]

この計算例から明らかなように、集光レンズの焦点近傍の光子密度が最も高い領域、すなわちビームウエストにおける光ビームの断面積を最小にするには、集光レンズに入射する光ビームの強度分布が平面波に近くなるまで、ビーム直径を拡大(ビームエキスパンド)すれば良い。また、集光レンズへ入射するビーム直径が同一の場合、光の波長が短い程、ビームウエスト径は小さくなることも判る。

[0083]

前述のように、本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法において熱レンズ効果を有効に利用するためには、ビームウエスト近傍の光子密度が最も高い領域における前記信号光のビーム断面積が、ビームウエストにおける前記制御光のビーム断面積を超えないように前記信号光および前記制御光のビーム断面の形状および大きさをそれぞれ設定することが好ましい。信号光および制御光ともにガウスビームを用いる場合であれば、以上の説明および計算式にしたがって、集光レンズなどの収束手段で収束する前の平行ビームの状態で、波長に応じて、信号光および制御光のビーム直径を、必要に応じてビームエキスパンドまに応じて、調節することによって、ビームウエストにおける前記制御光のビーム断面積が、ビームウエストにおける前記制御光のビーム断面積を超えないようにすることができる。ビームエキスパンドの手段としては、公知のもの、例えば2枚の凸レンズからなるケプラー型の光学系を用いることができる。

[0084]

[共焦点距離 Z c の計算]

一般に、ガウスビームの場合、凸レンズなどの収束手段で収束された光束のビームウエスト近傍、すなわち、焦点を挟んで共焦点距離 Z c の区間においては、収束ビームはほぼ平行光と見なすことができ、共焦点距離 Z c は、円周率 π 、ビームウエスト半径 ω の および波長 λ を用いた式〔3〕で表すことができる。

[0085]

【数 4 】

 $Z c = \pi \omega_0^2 / \lambda \cdots (3)$

式〔3〕のω。 に式〔2〕を代入すると、式(4)が得られる。

[0086]

【数 5 】

 $Z c = \pi (k/NA)^2 \lambda/4 \cdots [4]$

[0087]

[0088]

[集光レンズおよび受光レンズの開口数]

本発明の光路切替装置および光路切替方法においては、信号光および制御光を同軸で集光レンズによって収束させて熱レンズ形成素子中に焦点を結ぶように照射しているが、熱レンズ形成素子から通常よりも大きい開き角度で出射する光を受光レンズで受光して平行光

にコリメートする場合、この受光レンズの開口数(以下、NAと呼ぶ。)は、集光レンズのNAよりも大きくなるよう設定することが推奨される。更に受光レンズのNAは、集光レンズのNAの2倍以上が好ましい。ただし、集光レンズに入射するビーム半径ωよりも集光レンズの有効開口半径aが大きい(すなわちa/ω>1)の場合は、集光レンズの実質的開口数は集光レンズの開口数よりも小さい。よって、受光レンズの開口数は、集光レンズ開口数ではなく集光レンズの実質的開口数よりも大きく、2倍以上に設定することが好ましい。受光レンズのNAを、集光レンズのNAの2倍以上とすることによって、信号光のビーム直径が熱レンズ形成素子へ入射する際の2倍以上まで拡大されても、損失なしに受光することが可能となる。

[0089]

[光吸収層膜の最適膜厚]

光吸収層膜を構成する1または2枚の光吸収膜の厚さを変えず、熱レンズ形成層の厚さを変えて試料を作製し、光学濃度一定で膜厚の異なる複数の熱レンズ形成素子について実験した結果、上記のようにして計算される共焦点距離Zcの2倍を光吸収層膜の膜厚の上限としたとき、熱レンズ効果の光応答速度が充分高速になることが判った。

[0090]

光吸収層膜の膜厚の下限については、熱レンズ効果が発揮できる限りにおいて、薄ければ薄いほど好ましい。

[0091]

[保温層膜の膜厚]

保温層膜の膜厚には、光応答の大きさおよび/または速度を最大にするような最適値(下限値および上限値)が存在する。その値は熱レンズ形成素子の構成、光吸収層膜の材質および厚さなどに応じて、実験的に決定することができる。例えば、伝熱層膜として通常の硼硅酸ガラス、保温層膜および熱レンズ形成層の材質としてポリカーボネート、光吸収膜としてプラチナフタロシアニンの蒸着膜を用い、ガラス(伝熱層膜、膜厚150μm)/ポリカーボネート樹脂層(保温層)/ナフタロシアニン蒸着膜(光吸収膜、膜厚0.2μm)/ポリカーボネート樹脂層(熱レンズ形成層、膜厚20μm)/プラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜(光吸収膜、膜厚0.2μm)/ポリカーボネート樹脂層(保温層)/ガラス(伝熱層膜、膜厚150μm)という構成の熱レンズ形成素子を作成した場合、保温層膜の膜厚は好ましくは5nmから5μmであり、更に好ましくは50nmから500nmである。

[0092]

[伝熱層膜の膜厚]

伝熱層膜の膜厚にも、光応答の大きさおよび/または速度を最大にするような最適値(この場合は下限値)が存在する。その値は熱レンズ形成素子の構成、光吸収層膜の材質および厚さ、伝熱層膜の材質などに応じて、実験的に決定するできる。例えば、伝熱層膜として通常の硼硅酸ガラス、保温層膜および熱レンズ形成の材質としてポリカーボネート、光吸収膜としてプラチナフタロシアニンの蒸着膜を用い、ガラス(伝熱層膜、膜厚150μm)/ポリカーボネート樹脂層(保温層)/プラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜(光吸収膜、膜厚0.2μm)/ポリカーボネート樹脂層(発温層)/ガラス(伝熱層膜、膜厚0.2μm)/ポリカーボネート樹脂層(保温層)/ガラス(伝熱層膜、膜厚150μm)という構成の熱レンズ形成素子を作成した場合、伝熱層膜の厚さの下限は、好ましくは100μmに好ましくは100μmである。なお、伝熱層膜の膜厚の上限については光応答の大きさおよび/または速度からの制約はないが、用いられる集光レンズおよび受光レンズの方式、焦点距離および作動距離(ワーキングディスタンス)と整合させて設計する必要がある。

[0093]

【実施例】

以下、本発明の実施形態について、実施例を参照しながら詳細に説明する。

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[0094]

[実施例1]

図1には、実施例1の光路切替装置の概略構成が示されている。図1の光路切替装置は、「制御光光源、ダイクロイックミラー、集光レンズ、熱レンズ形成素子、受光レンズ、および穴付ミラー」からなる光路切替ユニットを3段直列に連結した場合を例示したものである。光路切替ユニットの連結数は、原理的には1個以上であれば特に制限はないが、実際には、光路切替ユニット1段当たりの信号光の透過率、光路切替装置に入射する信号光の初期強度、および、最終的に必要な信号光強度から連結可能な段数が計算される。例えば、光路切替ユニット1段当たりの透過率が80%であれば、3段直列連結の場合の総合透過率は51%となる。

[0095]

以下、図1に示す3段直列構成の光路切替装置を例にして、詳細に説明する。なお、図1における集光レンズ31および熱レンズ形成素子1の部分を抜き出した部分図を図2および図3に、更に受光レンズ41および穴付きミラー61を加えた部分図を図4に示す。図1ないし図4において、熱レンズ形成素子1を「伝熱層膜91/光吸収層膜92/伝熱層膜93」という3層構造として図示するが、これに限定されない。

[0096]

光ファイバー100からの入射信号光110をコリメートレンズ30でビーム半径5.0mmのほぼ平行光線になるようにしている。本実施例では、信号光の光源として、発振波長780mmの半導体レーザーを用いている。発振波長1350mm、1550mmの半導体レーザー光を用いても良い。本実施例では、熱レンズ形成素子1,2および3に各々熱レンズを形成させるための制御光121,122および123の制御光光源21,22および23として、いずれも発振波長650mmの半導体レーザーを用い、制御光の断続によって信号光光路の切替を行っている。制御光121,122および123は、いずれもビーム半径4.5mmの平行光線になるように、ビーム成形して用いている。制御光光源のレーザーパワーは、集光レンズ31,32または33のいずれの手前においても2ないし10mWとしている。

[0097]

制御光121,122および123、および、信号光110,111および112を共通の集光レンズ31,32および33で各々収束させて熱レンズ形成素子1,2および3へそれぞれ照射している。制御光および信号光の各々のビームウエストが、熱レンズ形成素子中において互いに重なり合うように、信号光と制御光をダイクロイックミラー51,52および53を用いて同一光軸、かつ、信号光と制御光が互いに平行になるように調整している。このようにすることによって、制御光ビームウエスト位置における光吸収によって形成された熱レンズ効果を、効率良く信号光の進行方向変更に利用することが可能になる。

[0098]

レーザー光をレンズで集光すると、ビームウエスト(集光点;焦点)での光強度分布は、、ガウス分布となる。光吸収膜で吸収される波長帯域のレーザー光を制御光として含む光と吸収膜を含む熱レンズ形成素子に集光レンズを通して照射し、熱レンズ形成層の温度が上層を変収を通じて、光吸収度を含む大きの中心を変収したが、光吸収の中心を受して、光吸収の中心を受して、光吸収の中心を受し、光吸収の中心を照射されたところが「光吸収の中心が分が収束されて照射されたところが「光吸収の中心が分から外の温度が最も高く、かつ、原活では、大変収の中心が含む光の収が熱に変わり、更に周囲に伝搬される熱により熱レンズ形成層を多が光のの形の光吸収が熱に変わり、更に周囲に伝搬される熱にして光吸収中心の居折率が光吸収中心がら外部へ向けて屈折率が光吸収中心がら外部へ向けて屈折率が高くなる分布を生じ、これが凹レンズのように機能する。で、光は、屈折率の大きいところよりも小さいところを通過するときの光速は、光強弱いガウス分布の中心部分が照射されたところを通過するときの光速よりも大きい。よって

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光は、光強度の弱いガウス分布の周辺部分が照射された方向に曲がる。これは、大気中での凹レンズと同じ動作である。

[0.099]

本実施例では、熱レンズ形成素子 1 、 2 および 3 を通過した信号光を受光レンズ 4 1 、 4 2 および 4 3 でほぼ平行光にコリメートしている。この受光レンズの開口数(以下、 N A と呼ぶ。)は、集光レンズの N A よりも大きくなるよう設定している。本実施例では、集光レンズの N A は 0 . 2 5 、受光レンズの N A は 0 . 5 5 を用いている。受光レンズの N A は 4 洗 上 2 が好ましい。この関係が満足されれば、集光レンズの N A は、集光レンズの N A の 2 倍以上が好ましい。この関係が満足されれば、集光レンズとコリメートレンズの N A の 2 倍以上とすることによって、信号光のビーム直径が熱レンズ形成素子へ入射する際の 2 倍以上まで拡大されても、損失なしに受光することが可能となる。なお、本実施例では集光レンズと受光レンズの焦点距離は同一とし、集光レンズの有効直径は約 1 0 m m のものを用いた。

[0100]

受光レンズ 4 1 , 4 2 および 4 3 でコリメートした信号光を穴付ミラー 6 1 , 6 2 および 6 3 に入射させている。後に詳細に説明するように、この穴付ミラーを設けることで信号 光の光路を切り替えることが可能となる。

[0101]

光吸収層膜の吸収帯域にある波長の制御光と透過帯域の波長である信号光とを、図2(a)に示すように熱レンズ形成素子1の光吸収層膜の入射面に近い位置5において焦点を結ぶように同時に照射すると、図3(a)に示すように制御光により入射面に近い位置に形成された熱レンズ50により、信号光は断面がリング状に拡がるように拡散された出射光201として通常の出射光200よりも大きい開き角度で出射する。一方、図2(b)に示すように熱レンズ形成素子の光吸収層膜の出射面に近い位置6において焦点を結ぶように同時に照射すると、図3(b)に示すように制御光により出射面に近い位置に形成された熱レンズ60により、信号光は収束された出射光117として出射する。図2(a)および図2(b)のいずれの場合も、制御光を照射しないと、図3(a)および図3(b)に点線で示すように信号光は熱レンズ50または60の影響を受けることなく、信号光のみが通常の開き角度の出射光200として出射する。

[0102]

このような熱レンズ効果を調べるため、熱レンズ効果の有無と集光点位置の相違に対応し た信号光ビーム断面における光強度分布の相違の測定を行った。すなわち、図1または図 4に概要を示す装置において、受光レンズ41の開口数0.55、集光レンズ31の開口 数 0 . 2 5 と し 、 穴 付 き ミ ラ ー 6 1 の 代 わ り に 図 7 に 概 要 を 示 す よ う な 光 強 度 分 布 測 定 器 700を設置し、熱レンズ形成素子1を透過した信号光ビームの全てを受光レンズ41で 受光し、平行光線として前記光強度分布測定器の受光部701(有効直径20mm)へ入 射させ、信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布を測定した。測定結果を図8、図9、および、図 10に示す。ここで、光強度分布測定器は、図7に示すように、受光部701(有効直径 20 mm) に対して幅1 mmの第一のスリット702を設け、第一のスリットの長さ方向 、すなわち図7において点710から点720の向きに、幅25μmの第二のスリット7 03を一定速度で移動させて、2枚のスリットが作る1mm×25μmの長方形の窓を通 過した光の強度を、前記窓の移動位置に対応させて測定する装置である。前記窓の移動位 置に対応させて光強度を測定するには、例えば、第二のスリット703の移動速度に同期 させたストレージオシロスコープ上に、前記窓を通過した光を受光した検出器の出力を記 録すれば良い。図8~図10は、以上のようにして、ストレージオシロスコープ上に記録 された信号光の光ビーム断面についての光強度分布を示すものであり、横軸(光ビーム断 面内の位置)は受光部701の中心を0として、図7の点710を負方向、点720を正 方向と座標を定めて表した位置に対応し、縦軸は光強度を表す。

[0103]

図8は、図4(a)の場合に対応し、熱レンズ形成素子1に制御光が入射せず、信号光の

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みが入射した場合の前記信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布である。この場合の光強度分布は、中心部分の強度が強く、周辺にいくにしたがって強度が弱まる分布(おおむね「ガウス分布」)である。したがって、この場合に充分な大きさの穴 161 を有する穴付きミラー 61 が図 4 (a) のように設置されていると、信号光ビーム 111 の全てが穴付きミラーの穴 161 を通過することができる。ここで、平行光として集光レンズ 31 (焦点距離 1) へ入射する信号光のビーム直径を 11、受光レンズ 11 (焦点距離 12) によって平行光とされた信号光ビーム 111 のビーム直径を 12 とすると、

【数 6 】

 $f_1: f_2 = d_1: d_2$ … [5] であるから、 d_2 は次の式によって求めることができる。

[0104]

【数7】

 $d_2 = (f_2 / f_1) \times d_1 \cdots (6)$

[0105]

穴付ミラー61は、本実施例1では、信号光の光軸と45度の角度をもって設置されている。また、穴161を通過する信号光の断面は円形である。したがって、穴161の形状は短径D₁、長径D₂の楕円である必要があり、D₁とD₂は次の式〔7〕の関係にある

[0106]

【数8】 ·

 $D_2 = D_1 \times \sqrt{2} \qquad \cdots \quad [7]$

[0107]

ここで、穴付きミラー61の楕円形穴161の短径 D_1 は、式〔6〕から求められる信号光ビーム111のビーム直径 d_2 よりも大きければ良い。ただし、 D_1 が大きすぎると制御光の照射によってリング状に拡大された信号光の一部も通過してしまう。すなわち、 D_1 の最適値は d_2 の1.02倍ないし1.2倍であり、より好ましくは1.01倍ないし1.1倍である。

[0108]

[0109]

図9は、焦点(集光点)を熱レンズ形成素子1の集光レンズ31に近い位置5(光の入射側)に設定し、制御光を照射したときの信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布である。この場合の光強度分布は、中心部分の光強度が弱く、周辺でリング状に光強度が増大する分布になっている。信号光ビーム断面の中心部の光強度は、制御光強度および熱レンズ形成素子1と焦点の位置関係に依存して減少し、制御光強度が増すにしたがってい、ゼロに近づいていく。また、信号光強度の極大位置は、元のビーム直径よりも大きな値(直径約15mm)であった。

[0110]

図10に対応する熱レンズ効果の利用については、実施例2に記載する。

[0111]

以上、まとめると、図3(a)の光学配置において、制御光照射の有無に対応して、熱レンズ形成素子を通過した信号光のビーム断面の光強度分布が図9のリング状分布(制御光照射の場合)の間で切り替えられ、これを、

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信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布の形状に適合した穴付きミラーによって、それぞれ別個に取り出すことによって、信号光の光路の切替が可能となる。

[0112]

穴付ミラー61は、本実施例1では、信号光の光軸と45度の角度をもって設置されている。穴付きミラー61のミラー面は、ガラス面上にアルミニウム膜をスパッターまたは蒸着して作成した。穴付きミラー61の穴161の部分は、ガラスに楕円状の穴を、45度傾けて開けて作成した。穴を開ける替わりに、楕円状にアルミニウム反射膜を付けなくても良いが、ガラス面には反射が数%あって信号光の減衰かつクロストークが起こるので、穴を開ける方が好ましい。また、反射膜は、アルミニウムに限らず、用いる制御光と信号光に反射がある材料であれれば良く、金、銀等でも良い。

[0113]

光路切替によって、信号光本来の進行方向から90度方向変換して取り出した信号光(スイッチ信号光)211,212および213は、集光レンズ71,72および73で集光して光ファイバー11,12および13に入射させている。

[0114]

制御光の光源21,22および23の全てが消灯している場合、信号光は熱レンズ効果を受けず、信号光111,112、次いで113として出射する。出射信号光113を集光レンズ40によって集光して光ファイバー101に入射させている。

[0115]

· なお、光ファイバー 1 1 , 1 2 , 1 3 、または、 1·0 1 の代わりに検出器等に入射させて 、情報を電気信号に変換して取り出しても良い。

[0116]

ここで、熱レンズ形成素子1,2 および3における制御光の透過率が0%でない限り、透過率に相当する分の制御光も熱レンズ形成素子1,2 および3を透過し、出射して来ることを測りなが後段の熱レンズ形成素子に入射して誤動作ないしクロストークを起こで限りなを避けるため、熱レンズ形成素子1,2 および3における制御光の透過率を0%に限りなく近づける必要がある。更に、熱レンズ形成素子1,2 および3の後ろまたは集光しとなく近づける必要がある。更に、熱レンズ形成素子1,2 および3の後ろまたは集光でとしては、制御光の波長帯域の光を完全に適けましい。これらの波長帯域の光を効率良く透過することができるような波長選択透過フィルターとしての機能を発揮させても良い。

[0117]

本実施例の光路切替装置は、「制御光光源、ダイクロイックミラー、集光レンズ、熱レンズ形成素子、受光レンズ、および穴付ミラー」からなる光路切替ユニットを3段直列に連結したものである。したがって、制御光を全て消灯している場合は信号光は直進して光ファイバー101へ入射するのに対し、制御光21を点灯した場合は信号光211が光ファイバー11へ、制御光21を消灯し制御光22を点灯した場合は信号光212が光ファイバー12へ、更に、制御光21および22を消灯し制御光23を点灯した場合は信号光213が光ファイバー13へ、光路が切り替えられて出射する。

[0118]

本実施例1で用いている熱レンズ形成素子1を図6では熱レンズ形成素子600としてその概略構成を表す断面図を示す。熱レンズ形成素子600へ信号光608および制御光609が集光レンズ610によって集光されて照射される。なお、図6に示す制御光609の光線は模式的なものであり、各層膜間における屈折を省略している。

[0119]

図6に示す伝熱層膜601/光吸収膜603/熱レンズ形成層605/光吸収膜604/

伝熱層膜 6 0 2 という構成の熱レンズ形成素子 6 0 0 は、例えば以下の手順で作成することができる。

[0120]

真空蒸着装置にゲート弁を経由して接続された基板洗浄用真空容器の内部に中心波長18 5 n m、出力 5 W の紫外線ランプを 2 灯および中心波長 2 5 4 n m、出力 5 W の紫外線ラ ンプ 2 灯 を 、 紫 外 線 が 基 板 表 面 に 照 射 さ れ る よ う な 配 置 で 取 り 付 け 、 基 板 (伝 熱 層 膜 6 0 1 および 6 0 2) としてガラス板 (2 4 m m × 3 0 m m × 0 . 1 5 m m) を 1 枚以上、搬 入した後、真空容器内部に、大気圧下、直径 0.05μmの微粒子を 100% 捕集するガ スフィルターを通過させた清浄な窒素ガスを満たして、内部に浮遊粉塵(直径 0 . 1 μ m 以上)および汚染性ガスが検出されなくなるまで雰囲気を清浄化してから直径 0.05μ mの微粒子を100%捕集するガスフィルターを通過させた酸素ガスを導入し、酸素濃度 を60%以上まで髙めてから紫外線ランプを点灯し、1時間に渡り、基板表面の紫外線照 射処理およびオゾン処理を行った。以上の浄化処理終了後、基板洗浄用真空容器内部を排 気し、10⁻⁴ Pa以下の高真空状態にしてから、同じく10⁻⁴ Pa以下の高真空状態 の真空蒸着装置内へ基板を移送した。予め蒸着源に導入しておいたプラチナフタロシアニ ン(組成式 C₃₂ H₁₆ N₈ P t)を抵抗線によって加熱し、600℃まで加熱して、 上記基板上へ真空蒸着した。基板温度の制御は特に行わなかった。蒸着の進行を水晶振動 子式膜厚計でモニターし、膜厚が 0 . 2 μmに到達した時点で蒸着源のシャッターを閉じ 、蒸着を終了した。

[0121]

このようにして基板上に作成した蒸着膜表面の走査型電子顕微鏡写真を撮影したところ、上記条件で真空蒸着したプラチナフタロシアニンは外径30ないし50nmの粒子状態で存在していることが判った。この粒子径は本実施例1における信号光の波長(780nm)および制御光の波長(633nm)の1/10未満であり、光散乱を起こさない大きさである。

[0122]

一方、ポリカーボネート樹脂(帝人化成製パンライトL1250(登録商標))1gをジクロロメタン19gに溶解した溶液を撹拌しながらn-ヘキサン300m1中へ注ぎ、析出した樹脂小塊を濾過し、n-ヘキサン30m1にて洗浄し、清浄な空気中で溶剤を除去し、粒子外径が50 μ m未満の微粉末になるよう粉砕した。このポリカーボネート樹脂微粉末を10 $^{-4}$ Pa以下の高真空容器中、徐々に加熱して100 $^{\circ}$ から120 $^{\circ}$ の温度範囲で48時間、脱気処理した。

[0123]

清浄な雰囲気下、先に作成したガラス基板上のプラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜の上に、高真空脱気処理した樹脂微粉末を散布し、その上にもう 1 枚のガラス基板上のプラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜を重ねて置き、これを高真空容器内に設置した加熱ステージ上に置き、 10^{-4} Pa以下まで排気し、240ないし260 ℃まで加熱し、一方、240ないし260 ℃まで加熱した加圧板を押しつけ、5 k g f / c m 2 の圧力で真空ホットプレスを行った。

[0124]

以上の手順によって、ガラス(伝熱層膜 $6\ 0\ 1$ 、膜厚 $1\ 5\ 0\ \mu$ m) / プラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜(光吸収膜 $6\ 0\ 3$ 、膜厚 0 . $2\ \mu$ m) / ポリカーボネート樹脂層(熱レンズ形成層 $6\ 0\ 5$ 、膜厚 $2\ 0\ \mu$ m) / プラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜(光吸収膜 $6\ 0\ 4$ 、膜厚 0 . $2\ \mu$ m) / ガラス(伝熱層膜 $6\ 0\ 2$ 、膜厚 $1\ 5\ 0\ \mu$ m)という構成の積層型熱レンズ形成素子を作成した。この熱レンズ形成素子の透過率は、波長 $7\ 8\ 0\ n$ mの信号光について $8\ 1\ \%$ 、波長 $6\ 3\ 3\ n$ mの制御光について $0\ 0\ 9\ \%$ (事実上 $0\ \%$) であった。

[0125]

なお、熱レンズ形成層の膜厚は、樹脂粉末の散布量、加熱温度および加圧処理時間(数分から数時間)を調整することによって、制御した。

[0126]

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本実施例1の光路切替装置の光応答速度を測定するため、信号光を連続光とし、一方、制御光を周波数数Hzから100kHzで、デューティ比1:1の矩形波断続光線として照射し、光路切替された信号光の強度振幅の大小を比較した。

[0127]

図1に示す制御光光源21からの制御光121を光検出器に導いてオシロスコープ上で測定した制御光の波形1210および制御光121の明滅に対応して光路切替された信号光211を光検出器に導いてオシロスコープ上で測定した信号光の波形2110を図13および図14に示す。なお、図14の縦軸は図13の場合の3倍に拡大されている。また、制御光121を断続する矩形波の周波数を200Hzないし100kHzに設定し、そのときの信号光の断続に対応する信号光の波形2110の振幅Lを測定した結果を図15に示す。

[0128]

図13において制御光121(図1)を断続する矩形波の周波数500Hzであり、このときの信号光の断続に対応する信号光の波形2110の振幅Lを基準の1とすると、制御光121(図1)を断続する矩形波の周波数範囲0.2から2kHzにおいて、振幅Lは、ほぼ1であった。すなわち、500マイクロ秒で完全な光路切替が可能であることが確認された。これは、電気ヒーターを用いた熱光学効果を用いた光スイッチ(応答速度はミリ秒オーダー)に比べ、2倍以上の高速応答である。

[0129]

更に周波数を高めた場合の例として、周波数 2 0 k H z における信号光の波形 2 1 1 0 を図 1 4 に示す。図 1 4 から判るように熱レンズ効果による光路切替が完了しない内に制御光を消灯すると、信号光の波形はのこぎりの刃状になり、振幅 L は小さくなっていく。すなわち、熱レンズ効果の応答速度を超えると光路の切替は不完全になり、信号光の一部は光路切替されずに直進する。

[0130]

本実施例1の光路切替装置の耐久性を測定するため、信号光を連続光とし、一方、制御光を周波数数1kHzで、デューティ比1:1の矩形波断続光線として照射し、光路切替された信号光の強度振幅の時間を比較した。その結果、連続1万時間経過しても、信号光の強度振幅は減衰しなかった。

[0131]

本実施例1の光路切替装置の偏波依存性を検証するため、信号光および制御光に1枚の偏光素子を挿入し、偏光角を種々変化させる実験を行ったが、偏波依存性は全く認められなかった。

[0132]

[実施例2]

信号光ビーム断面における光強度分布の一例を表す図10は、図3(b)および図11(b)に示すような光学配置の場合に対応し、焦点(集光点)を図2(b)に示す熱レンズ形成素子1の受光レンズ41に近い位置6(光の出射側)に設定し、制御光を照射したときの信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布である。この場合は、中心部分の光強度が、制御光を照射しない場合の中心部分の光強度(図8)より強くなっている。この場合、信号光ビーム断面の中心部の光強度は、制御光強度および熱レンズ形成素子1と焦点6との位置関係に依存するが、制御光非照射時の数倍にも達する。

[0133]

したがって、この場合に穴付きミラー61が設置されていると、信号光ビームの大部分が穴付きミラーの穴161を通過する。ここで、穴付きミラー61の穴161の大きさが最適化(本実施例2の場合、直径2mm)されていると、穴付きミラー61によって反射される信号光を事実上ゼロにすることができる。しかしながら、穴付きミラー61の穴161の大きさを最適化しても、制御光を照射しない場合(図4(a)、図8)において、図11(a)に示すような信号光の中心部分が穴161を漏れ信号光116として通過してしまうことは防げない。すなわち、本実施例2の光路切替装置においては、信号光ビーム

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断面の光強度分布がガウス分布ないしガウス分布に近い場合、必ず、ある程度の漏れ信号 光116 (クロストーク)が発生する。

[0134]

しかるに、熱レンズ形成素子へ入射する信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布を変更することによって、このような漏れ信号光を事実上ゼロにすることができる。すなわち、図1に示すように、光ファイバー100から出射した信号光110をコリメートレンズ30を用い凹と整形する際、レンズの形状(例えば、円錐形レンズの利用)または構成(凸レンズとで信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布を図9に相当することが容易にできる。このような断面光強度分布の信号光110を集光レンズ31にて焦点位置6(図11(a))を通過するように収束して知知でで発表子1を透過させた後、受光レンズ41で平行光線に戻すと、その光ビーム断面が大いの強度分布は図9に相当するように周辺部分で強く、その穴161を通過するように「リンの光力を表別であるため、穴付きミラー61を設置した場合、そのの光強度分布がこのように「リンだ状場合のため、穴付きミラー61の穴161を通過していく。

[0135]

図11に例示するような光学配置において、制御光および信号光の焦点が熱レンズ形成素子の出射側に近い位置6になるよう調整し、更に信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布をリング状にすることによって、制御光非照射のとき、信号光本来の進行方向から90度、光路を切り替えて信号光を出射させること、また、制御光照射時に信号光を直進させることができる。

[0136]

本実施例2の光路切替装置の光応答速度を測定するため、信号光を連続光とし、一方、制御光を周波数数Hzから100kHzで、デューティ比1:1の矩形波断続光線として照射し、光路切替された信号光の強度振幅の大小を比較した。その結果、1Hzのときの信号光の強度振幅を基準として、2kHzまで、強度振幅は変化せず、更に周波数を高めた場合、強度振幅は徐々に減衰し、10kHzのとき半減した。すなわち、500マイクロ秒で完全な光路切替が可能であることが確認された。これは、電気ヒーターを用いた熱光学効果を用いた光スイッチに比べ、2倍以上の高速応答である。

[0137]

本実施例2の光路切替装置の耐久性を測定するため、信号光を連続光とし、一方、制御光を周波数数1 k H z で、デューティ比1:1の矩形波断続光線として照射し、光路切替された信号光の強度振幅の時間を比較した。その結果、連続1万時間経過しても、信号光の強度振幅は減衰しなかった。

[0138]

[実施例3]

実施例1における穴付きミラー61の設置角度(信号光110の光軸に対して45度)を変更し、楕円状穴161の形状(短径に対する長径の長さ)を設置角度に基づいて三角関数を用いて計算して決定することによって、信号光110の光軸に対する光路切替の角度を、おおよそ5度から175度の範囲で自由に変更することができる。

[0139]

また、信号光110の光軸を回転軸として、穴付きミラー61の設置位置を回転し、集光レンズ71等の位置を移動することによっても、信号光110の光軸に対する光路切替の方向を、0から360度の範囲で自由に変更することができる。

[0140]

[実施例4]

実施例1におけるプラチナフタロシアニン蒸着膜を光吸収層膜とした熱レンズ形成素子の替わりに、次に記載の方法で作成される熱レンズ生成素子を用いた他は実施例1と同様に

して、本実施例 4 の光路切替装置を作成し、光路切替方法を試みたところ、実施例 1 の場合と同等以上の結果を得ることができた。

[0141]

まず、テトラアミノ銅フタロシアニンを濃塩酸中でジアゾ化し、そこへ、メタクリル酸メチル、メタクリル酸ブチル、および、メタクリル酸 2 ーヒドロキシエチルのモノマー混合物(モル比4:1:1)を加え、徐々に加熱して銅フタロシアニンを含有する重合体結合色素を合成した(全重量中の銅フタロシアニン部分の重量約60%)。これを2 ーブタノンに溶解し、酸および不溶解物質を除去した後、空気中に曝して活性度を低下させたアルミナ(平均粒子径約50μm)を充填剤としたカラムに2 ーブタノンを溶剤として展開し、精製した。この重合体結合色素をジクロロメタン中でポリカーボネート樹脂と混合し、樹脂に対する重合体結合色素の含有量0.5重量%の混合物を得、溶剤を除去し、微粉末状に粉砕した後、10⁻⁴ Pa以下の高真空状態において室温から200℃まで徐々に昇温して脱気処理した。

[0142]

一方、真空蒸着装置にゲート弁を経由して接続された基板洗浄用真空容器の内部に中心波長185nm、出力5Wの紫外線ランプを2灯および中心波長254nm、出力5Wの紫外線ランプ2灯を、紫外線が基板表面に照射されるような配置で取り付け、基板(伝熱層膜601および602)としてガラス板(24mm×30mm×0.15mm)を1枚以上、搬入した後、真空容器内部に、大気圧下、直径0.05μmの微粒子を100%捕集するガスフィルターを通過させた清浄な窒素ガスを満たして、内部に浮遊粉塵(直径0.1μm以上)および汚染性ガスが検出されなくなるまで雰囲気を清浄化してから直径0.05μmの微粒子を100%捕集するガスフィルターを通過させた酸素ガスを導入し、改整素濃度を60%以上まで高めてから紫外線ランプを点灯し、1時間に渡り、基板表面の紫外線照射処理およびオゾン処理を行った。以上の浄化処理終了後、基板洗浄用真空容器内部を排気し、10⁴Pa以下の高真空状態にしてから、同じく10⁴Pa以下の高真空状態の真空ホットプレス装置内へ基板を移送した。

[0143]

表面を浄化した上記ガラス板2枚の間に、上記の銅フタロシアニン含有重合体結合色素とポリカーボネートの混合粉末を置き、10⁻⁴ Pa以下の高真空状態において250℃にて、ホットプレス加工を行った後、室温まで冷却した。

[0144]

以上の手順によって、ガラス(伝熱層膜601、膜厚150 μ m)/銅フタロシアニン含有重合体結合色素とポリカーボネートの混合物からなる光吸収層膜兼熱レンズ形成層(膜厚25 μ m)/ガラス(伝熱層膜601、膜厚150 μ m)という構成の熱レンズ形成素子を作成した。

[0145]

本実施例4の光路切替装置の光応答速度を測定するため、信号光を連続光とし、一方、制御光を音響光学素子によって周波数数Hzから100kHzで、デューティ比1:1の矩形波断続光線として照射し、光路切替された信号光の強度振幅の大小を比較した。その結果、1Hzのときの信号光の強度振幅を基準として、3kHzまで、強度振幅は変化せず、更に周波数を高めた場合、強度振幅は徐々に減衰し、12kHzのとき半減した。すなわち、333マイクロ秒で完全な光路切替が可能であることが確認された。これは、電気ヒーターを用いた熱光学効果を用いた光スイッチに比べ、3倍以上の高速応答である。

[0146]

本実施例 4 の光路切替装置の耐久性を測定するため、信号光を連続光とし、一方、制御光を音響光学素子によって周波数数 1 k H z で、デューティ比 1 : 1 の矩形波断続光線として照射し、光路切替された信号光の強度振幅の時間を比較した。その結果、連続 2 万時間経過しても、信号光の強度振幅は減衰しなかった。

[0147]

【発明の効果】

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以上、詳細に説明したように、本発明によって、電気回路や機械的可動部分を用いずに、耐久性の高い、偏波依存性のない、光路切替の角度および方向を自由に設定可能な、信号光の光強度減衰が少なく多重連結使用が可能で、充分実用的な応答速度の光路切替装置および光路切替方法を提供することができる。

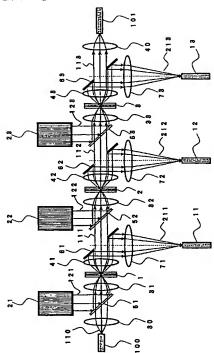
【図面の簡単な説明】

- 【図1】実施例1の光路切替装置の概略構成図である。
- 【図2】熱レンズが形成されない場合の光の進み方を示した図である。
- 【図3】熱レンズが形成された場合の光の進み方を示した図である。
- 【図4】実施例1における光路切替の原理を示した模式図である。
- 【図5】熱レンズ形成素子の構成例を例示した断面図である。
- 【図6】熱レンズ形成素子の構成例を例示した断面図である。
- 【図7】信号光ビーム断面の光強度分布測定に用いたスリットと光ビームとの関係を示す図である。
- 【図8】信号光のビーム断面の光強度分布を表した図である。
- 【図9】信号光のビーム断面の光強度分布を表した図である。
- 【図10】信号光のビーム断面の光強度分布を表した図である。
- 【図11】実施例2における光路切替の原理を示した模式図である。
- 【図 1 2 】集光レンズなどで収束されたガウスビームの焦点近傍における様子を表した模式図である。
- 【図13】オシロスコープで観察した制御光および信号光の波形を表した図である。
- 【図14】オシロスコープで観察した制御光および信号光の波形を表した図である。
- 【図15】制御光を断続する周波数と光路切替された信号光の強度(振幅)の関係を表した図である。

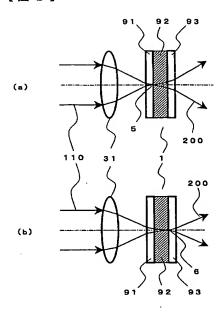
【符号の説明】

1, 2, 3 熱レンズ形成素子、5, 6 ビームウエスト(焦光点)、11, 12, 13 光路切替後の出射信号光光ファイバー、21,22,23 制御光光源、30 コリメ ートレンズ、31,32,33 集光レンズ、40 直進出射信号光の集光レンズ、41 , 42, 43 受光レンズ、50 入射側熱レンズ、51, 52, 53 ダイクロイック ミラー、60 出射側熱レンズ、61,62,63 穴付ミラー、71,72,73 光 路切替後の出射信号光集光レンズ、91 伝熱層膜、92光吸収層膜、93 伝熱層膜、 100 入射信号光の光ファイバー、101 直進出射信号光の光ファイバー、110 入射信号光、111,112,113 直進信号光、116 漏れ信号光、117 直進信号光、121,122,123 制御光、141,142,143- 波長選択透過 穴付きミラーの穴、200 通常の開き角度の出射信号光、201 フィルター、161 リング状に拡がる出射信号光、211、212、213 光路切替後の出射信号光、3 00 波面、301 焦点(集光点)、500 熱レンズ形成素子、501 伝熱層膜、 502 伝熱層膜、503 光吸収膜、504 光吸収膜、505 熱レンズ形成層、5 06 光透過層、507 屈折率分布型レンズ、508 信号光、509 制御光、60 0 熱レンズ形成素子、601 伝熱層膜、602 伝熱層膜、603 光吸収膜、60 光吸収膜、605 熱レンズ形成層、608 信号光、609 制御光、610 集 光レンズ、700 光強度分布測定器、1210 制御光の波形、2110 信号光の波 形。

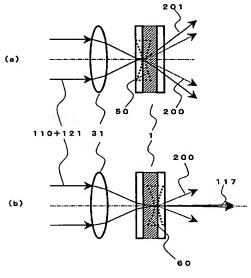
[図1]



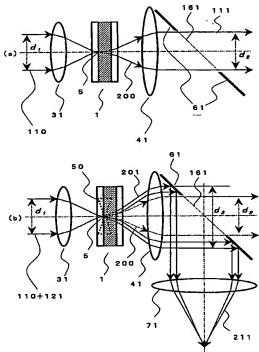
[図2]

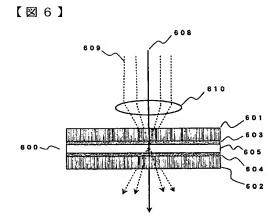


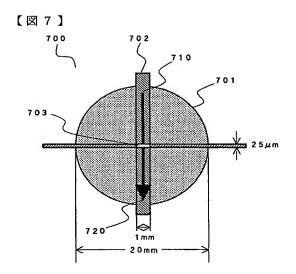
[図3]

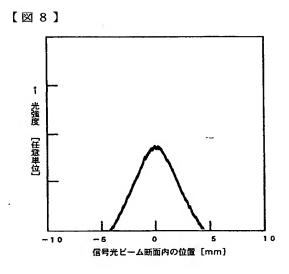


[図4]

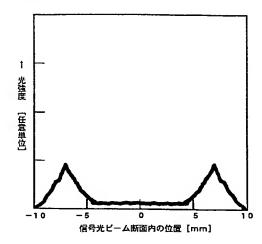




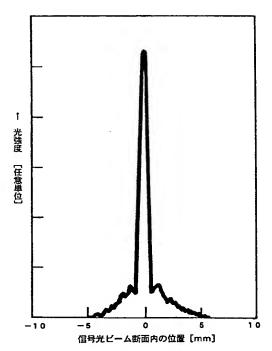




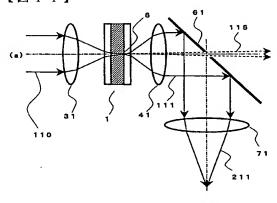
[図9]



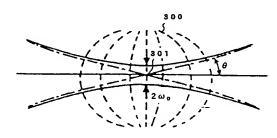
[図10]



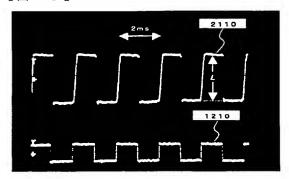
[図11]



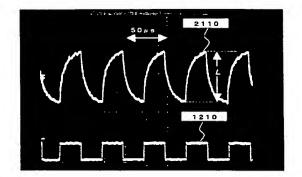
【図12】



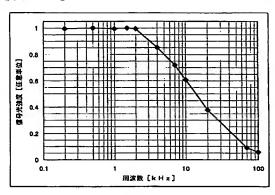
[図13]



[図14]



【図15】



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